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ABSTRACT

This teacher's resource guide is designed to accompany resource packets that include fine art reproductions. The resource introduces students to the accomplishments and contributions of eight 20th century women artists: Isabel Bishop; Jenny Holzer; Kathe Kollwitz; Maya Ying Lin; Mary Ellen Mark; Maria Martinez; Alice Neel; and Faith Ringgold. This guide, which is geared toward use with junior high school and senior high school students, includes an introduction, a student survey, instructional strategies, a brief history and a time line of women artists. Each unit presents objectives, information, and resources for subject related content and activities centered in each of the disciplines of art education: art criticism, art history, aesthetics, and art production. Vocabulary terms, assessment guides, student planning sheets, worksheets, and bibliographies are provided for each unit. Contains 29 references and information about the author. (MM)

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ED 406 320

A Fine Art Print Program

Junior/Senior High

Images of COMMITMENT

20th Century Women Artists

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- Bishop
- Kollwitz
- Lin
- Mark
- Martinez
- Holzer
- Neel
- Ringgold

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Art and Cultural Education Materials

Images of COMMITMENT

20th Century Women Artists

by
Diane D. Kordich, Ed.D.

1913

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DEDICATION:

In memory of Cyril Miles, an art educator whose career was marked by her love for the cultural diversity of her students. She valued and nurtured the self-esteem of each individual.

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During the summers of 1990 through 1993, the Getty Center for Education in the Arts sponsored four seminars on Discipline-Based Art Education under the direction of Michael Day and Frank Philip. These seminars helped to shape my perception and refine my understanding of the DBAE philosophy that forms the foundation of this program.

During the creation of *Images of Commitment*, I drew upon the expertise of many of my colleagues. This program would not have been possible without their scholarship, generosity and commitment to excellence.

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Photo Credits

Isabel Bishop, 1982, Courtesy of Midtown Payson Galleries, 745 Fifth Avenue at 57th Street, New York, NY. Photographer: Nancy Schiff

Jenny Holzer, Courtesy of Barbara Gladstone Gallery, NY. Photographer: Michaela Zeidler

Käthe Kollwitz, 1927, Courtesy of Founders Society Detroit Institute of Arts

Maya Ying Lin, 1994, Courtesy of Wexner Center for the Arts, Ohio State University

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Maria Martinez, ca.1925, Courtesy of Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona, Photographer: C. M. Wood

Alice Neel, Courtesy of Moore College of Art & Design Library Archives

Faith Ringgold, 1992, Courtesy of Faith Ringgold, Inc.

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To The Teacher

Images of Commitment is a supplemetary curriculum program designed to introduce your students to the accomplishments and contributions of eight 20th century women artists. Your students will benefit from a broad scope of activities which provide learning opportunities in the disciplines of art history, art criticism, aesthetics and art production.

Special Features of this program include:

- 8 full-color fine art reproductions

A comprehensive Teacher's resource guide with:

- An Introduction
- Student Survey
- A History of Women Artists
- Timeline of Women Artists
- Instructional Strategies for art history, art criticism aesthetics and art production
- Art Criticism content and activities
- Art History content and activities
- Aesthetics content and activities
- Art Production content and activities
- Suggestions for Assessment

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HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

1. Become familiar with the content and format of the resource.
2. Read the Instructional Strategies for the four disciplines of art history, art criticism, aesthetics and art production. The strategies offer guidelines for the implementation of each discipline.
3. Read the History of Women Artists overview.
4. Select one or more of the women's history activities for your students.
5. Choose one unit of study and review the content and format of the lessons. The individual units present the content in the four disciplines in the following order: art criticism, art history, aesthetics and art production. Content and activities specific to each artist are included. Prepare the necessary materials for each component.

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

STUDENT SURVEY

The survey is designed to help you gather information concerning the depth of knowledge and experience your students have in the visual arts. It will also help your students examine their values in relation to their own artistic expression and content.

Duplicate as many student surveys as necessary. Distribute the surveys to your students. After they have completed their surveys take a class period to discuss the results. You may choose to select one or more questions and use them for written assignments.

The survey can also serve as a pre and post attitudinal document. To use the survey in this manner, administer it at the beginning of the school year or semester. Collect the completed surveys and keep them on file. At some later date during or at the end of the school year, have your students complete a second survey. Evaluate the results of their responses to determine their areas of growth.

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STUDENT SURVEY

Complete the following questions on the survey. Record your experiences in the visual arts and identify the values that you hold to be important.

1. Do you do any visual art at home? What types of things do you do?

2. Does anyone in your family work in the visual arts? Does any one in your family enjoy working with their hands in activities, such as sewing, woodworking, etc.?

3. Do you ever discuss the visual arts, music, theater or dance at home? Which ones?

4. Have you ever visited an art museum or gallery? How many times? More than 10 times, 10 times, 5 times, once, never ? Did you enjoy your visit(s)? Why or why not?

5. Does your family celebrate any customs or traditions on a regular basis? Yearly? Monthly? Weekly?

6. What social, economic or political issues of today concern you? Why?

7. What values do you believe are important? Honesty, loyalty, love, patriotism, family, health?

8. In your opinion what universal issues effect people wherever they live? Poverty, illiteracy, prejudice, hunger, illness, etc.? Discuss the issue that you feel is the most important.

9. Do all people share the same values? Why or why not? What often occurs among people when they do not share the same values?

10. What ideas or concerns do you have that you might want to express through a work of art?

Name:_____

Introduction

WHY HAVE THERE BEEN NO GREAT WOMEN ARTISTS?

This question was asked by Linda Nochlin in an essay with the same title in 1971.[1] Historically, the contributions of women artists have been virtually ignored. For the most part, museum collections and educational resources featuring women artists are minimal.

In order to place the eight 20th century women artists featured in this resource guide into a historical context, it is helpful to become acquainted with the events and circumstances of the past. To understand the lack of recognition accorded to women artists over the centuries, it is important to examine the surrounding social customs and prejudices which often hindered their development as artists.

A HISTORY OF WOMEN ARTISTS[2]

ANTIQUITY TO THE MIDDLE AGES

Ancient writings discuss three women artists of antiquity—Thamyris (or *Timarete)*, Marcia (or *Iaia*) and Irene. Each of these women were daughters of painters. Marcia (c. 90 B.C.) carved and painted figures of ivory and painted a self-portrait. The quality of her work surpassed other artists of her time. Consequently, Marcia received higher payment for her art.

MIDDLE AGES

Before the 14th century, women were encumbered with difficult domestic chores. In addition to raising children, they grew and preserved food, worked in the fields, raised domestic animals, brewed beer and made clothing by carding, spinning, weaving and sewing textiles. The abundance of such activities kept them close to home. During the thirteenth century, the domestic industries of brewing beer, baking bread and weaving textiles—activities which had previously provided extra income for the women's families—were gradually removed from the home. By the 16th century, these industries had become male trades. Small shops previously maintained by master craftsmen which formerly allowed the wife to participate in the business *and* her domestic duties, were replaced by larger shops in new locations. With these changes, the Medieval guilds eventually excluded women in order to protect the welfare of the male masters and journeymen. The methods by which women made money prior to the 15th century gradually disappeared. Providing a livelihood was very difficult for women who did not marry or who lacked a dowry necessary to become a nun. Such women were afforded very few opportunities.

Between the 1200s and 1500s, women continued to dominate the production of embroidered vestments and tapestries for churches and the production of illuminated manuscripts. These manuscripts were made by nuns until the late thirteenth century. The women who participated in these areas of production were the daughters of aristocrats, noblemen or wealthy merchants and were usually literate. They had more leisure time to develop their education and artistic skills. Most of the women who produced church embroideries/tapestries and secular tapestries are unknown. Even the finest medieval illuminations are not signed.

RENAISSANCE ITALY

Prior to the Italian Renaissance, the work of male artists was often considered to be craft rather than art. In an effort to secure a professional status, educational standards for artists were increased. The traditional seven year apprenticeship with a master artist was no longer sufficient. With the new standards, artists were expected to acquire a liberal arts education with an emphasis on mathematics, the laws of perspective, a knowledge of ancient art based on literature and personal observation. The training also included learning to draw the human body, first by studying corpses, then clothed models and finally the nude male body. Furthermore, it was assumed that artists would travel to major art centers such as Rome, Florence, Naples and Bologna to study their contemporaries or the best art of the past two generations.

On the other hand, women at this time were not afforded the freedom to travel, especially unaccompanied. Consequently they were denied the same educational opportunities as their male counterparts. Considered inferior, they were not encouraged to learn how to read unless they were going to be a nun or had the possibility of inheriting political power. To be accomplished, well-educated ladies, daughters of wealthy families were sent to nunneries for their education which included learning how to copy and decorate manuscripts. However, this education was not without its limits. For example, while male artists had the opportunity to draw from live models, it was considered improper for women to have any knowledge of the nude male form. It was feared that drawing from nude models would compromise the morals and reputations of

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young women. The ideal woman, as described by Christian teachings, was expected to be chaste, modest, pious and passive.

These attitudes about women began to change by 1528 with the release of a popular publication by Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*. In this work, Castiglione stressed that in an aristocratic household, the ideal female should be educated to paint, play a musical instrument, sing, write poetry and engage in stimulating conversation. This idea of courtly behavior was disseminated quickly, to a larger reading audience, with the invention of the printing press. These changing attitudes helped to emancipate women from illiteracy. Castiglione's ideas had a major impact on women who became painters in Italy. For example, Sofonisba Anguissola (1532-1625) was a female painter emancipated from past restrictions who eventually became a famous painter in the Spanish court of Philip II.

This new way of thinking encouraged women to develop their skills in music, needlework, calligraphy, engraving, oil and watercolor. They did small self-portraits and still-lifes. These were viewed as the minor arts and, therefore, were not considered to be of the same importance as works created by men. Women were not permitted to excel in any one area, such as painting large oil paintings—the medium of great male artists—because to do so was viewed as immodest behavior for young women. Viewed as insignificant, these women were not considered to be great artists in their time.

ITALY, 16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES

Women were supervised by the men in their families. They were not allowed to manage their own finances, travel, or experience the art and culture of other areas. In the sixteenth century, most women artists were trained by their artist father or were taught at home by a master artist. Women artists were trained in the style of their male teacher. As restrictive customs, mores, and prejudices towards women artists decreased, fathers were less likely to be disapproving. A woman's artistic talent was a means for generating an income for her family and was her dowry to marriage.

Women artist worked in two ways. The first was by assisting a male family member in carrying out his commissions. This assistance involved copying finished compositions, painting the background or, in some cases, painting most of the work. Regardless of the amount of work the woman contributed, the male artist always signed the work. Second, many women artists married men who were also artists. In addition to raising the children and managing the household, these women often abandoned their own artwork and put their artistic energies into helping their husbands. In a few cases when the male artist passed away, the woman was able to continue painting and sign her name to the work.

However, some women refused to follow the conventions of society. Sofonisba Anguissola led the way for other women artists by painting portraits and self-portraits and signing her name to her work. While a few women followed Anguissola's lead, lack of training limited their work to miniatures, portraits, still lifes and florals—work that proved to be of little competition with that of the male artists. Despite their artistic competency, their work was considered mere novelty. For women artists, landscape art would have to wait until the 19th century when they could travel alone and sketch their subject matter.

FLANDERS, 1550-1600

Although there is little surviving data available on women artists in Northern Europe, women in Flanders had a higher social status than those in Italy. Widows of artists were allowed to join guilds and work in their deceased husband's profession. Furthermore, there were a variety of portraits of women from a wide range of social levels. Portraits were a sign of the status and importance of that person. With the Protestant Reformation and the popularity of *The Book of the Courtier*, the status of women continued to improve. In addition, Protestantism demanded knowledge of the Bible, therefore universal literacy was mandated for both men and women and elementary schools were established for both boys and girls. The Flemish counterpart of Anguissola in Italy was Levina Teerlinc (c.1520-1576) who also painted at court.

18TH CENTURY

In Europe, the medieval system of training in a famous artist's workshop was replaced by studying at an art academy. The art academies were established in the sixteenth century and were initially more like social clubs than art schools. By the eighteenth century, it was very important for an artist to be elected to the academy in order to win prizes and ensure future commissions. At the Paris Academy, the two advantages of being a member were prestige and permission to exhibit in the Salon. A few women artists were admitted to these academies, but still did not receive all of the privileges of membership granted to the male students. For example, some women were allowed to attend the meetings; most were not permitted at all. Excluded from drawing lessons, competing for prizes and holding office, women in the academies were basically honorary members.

As previously stated, it was important for artists to be able to skillfully draw the human figure if they were to be recognized as *established* artists. Although it is known that Artemisia Gentileschi (c.1593-1652) drew from female models, women artists in general were excluded from viewing the male nude. For a woman to view the unclothed figure of a male was considered scandalous and detrimental to her reputation. The only woman during this era known to draw the male nude was Giulia Lama (c.1685-1753). The next occurrence of a female artist drawing the male nude was not until the nineteenth century. These women were exceptions to the rule. As late as the early nineteenth century, women still were not admitted to life drawing classes with nude models. Considering that the training at the academies of art was based on this type of drawing, such limitations on women artists' made it extremely difficult for them to be taken seriously.

Conclusions about Women Artists Between 1550-1800:

- Women artists were usually daughters of fathers who were artists.
- Those who married, married artists.
- Prior to 1800, most of these women were trained by their fathers, husbands or another male relative.
- Unable to adequately study the human figure or attend the art academies, these women artists painted portraits and still-lifes. They painted more women and children then did the men artists of the time.

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- After 1870, women artists were no longer considered eccentric and even modest painters could survive financially by giving drawing lessons.
- A number of women artists became international celebrities: 16th century—Sofonisba Anguissola, Levina Teerlinc and Lavinia Fontana; 17th century—Elisabetta Sirani and Rachel Ruysch; 18th century—Rosalba Carriera, Angelica Kauffman and Elizabeth Vigee-LeBrun.
- Most of the women artists were popular and comfortable in court and aristocratic circles where they were considered to be a rarity. These women had refined social skills.
- Women were not afforded the benefit of academic training in anatomy, figure drawing, perspective and traditional composition. This training was restricted to men, leaving women artists at a disadvantage.

THE 19TH CENTURY: ENGLAND, FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES

During the nineteenth century, women artists were active in England despite the fact that they were restricted from attending the Royal Academy. Artist Eliza Bridell-Fox started an evening class that allowed students to work from a nude female model. In 1859, this situation led to several protests against the Royal Academy over the inequality of art training for women as compared to that available to men. By 1868, thirteen women had enrolled in the academy. Men and women's art classes were held separately. Although by 1891 women drew from nude models, they were restricted to working with the "draped living model", which was a nude partially draped in material. Finally, in 1903, the Royal Academy allowed women to begin studying in mixed classes, with the exception of the life drawing class, in which women and men continued to study separately. The Pennsylvania Academy of Art in the United States and with minor variations, the academies in France were organized in a similar way.

Despite the inadequate training in England, women artists still participated in exhibitions. Listings from annual exhibition catalogues of the Royal Academy indicate that there were many female participants. Some painted in the popular English narrative style. Paintings done in this style told stories with moral and psychological overtones.

Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, women were becoming more independent and were flocking to the private art schools of Paris to draw the male nude and receive criticism from academic artists. Some of these famous schools were Calorossi, Julian and Matisse (run by Henri Matisse). Women artists were still excluded from the art academies which trained men. Even with academic training, women were restricted in their pursuit of a career in art. By 1896, women were admitted to the prestigious Ecole des Beaux-Arts in France. As access to education in art increased, more women became professional artists. During this time, two novels about the obstacles facing women artists were written. These were Dinah Maria Clark's *Olive* (English) and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps' *The Story of Avis* (American).

EARLY 20TH CENTURY[3]

During the twentieth century, the world of art changed dramatically. In the beginning, there were numerous avant-garde movements that radically changed the idea of Western art: Impressionism, German Expressionism, Abstract Expressionism, Surrealism, Cubism and Fauvism. There was an increase in the number of practicing women artists. In the 1930's, 41% of the total number of professional artists in the United States were women. During the Depression, the U.S. government, under the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, initiated a program known as the New Deal. One of the projects sponsored by the New Deal was the Public Works of Art Project (WPA) which was designed to give artists employment. This project accomplished two important things for women artists—women were able to work with men and were judged with men on an equal basis. Some of the women who participated in the Public Works Project included: Louise Nevelson, Lee Krasner, Isabel Bishop, Alice Neel, Marion Greenwood, Minna Citron, Doris Lee, Lucienne Bloch.

In the 1940's, the Museum of Modern Art gave institutional approval to Abstract Expressionism. Artists who worked in a figurative style were considered conservative and out-of-date. At the same time, support for public art programs virtually disappeared. For more than thirty years, some women artists worked in isolation without support of any art group or movement. Those women who chose to work in the accepted style of Abstract Expression were subjected to sexist criticism, found in remarks like "women can't paint" or "this painting is so good you'd never know it was done by a woman."

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, there was a backlash from a number of artists against the domination and almost exclusive acceptance of modernism, or Abstract Expressionism. Despite its dominance, many artists chose to work outside of this style. For example, conceptual and environmental artists worked with ideas instead of objects. The civil rights, black, women, anti-nuclear and anti-war (Vietnam) movements evolved and resulted in demonstrations of social concern. Modern art, with its emphasis on abstraction and formalism, did not reflect this increase in social and political awareness. This change in awareness allowed for multi-cultural and multi-ethnic forms of expression.

At the same time, women artists led demonstrations against the Whitney Museum of Art Annual, the Museum of Modern Art and the School of Visual Arts which had been exhibiting and collecting works by predominately male artists. Faith Ringgold participated in these demonstrations which resulted in closure of the museums for one day. Statistics show that in 1972, seventy-five percent of all the art students in America were women. However, only eighteen percent of all commercial galleries exhibited works by women and only a maximum of ten percent of all works of art purchased by museums were created by women.

Effecting change is a slow process. Twelve years later in 1984, women artists demonstrated against the Museum of Modern Art again, to opposes the return to the dominance of male artists in exhibitions. The Guerrilla Girls, an anonymous group of women artists disguised in gorilla masks, began to hang posters—which graphically and statistically documented sexism and racism in New York galleries and museums—on the buildings of Manhattan's Soho district . There are two examples of these posters at the end of this section.

As many women were trained in art history in the seventies, they began to research the question of "Why are there no great women artists?" Since that time, there have been numerous books written on the history of women artists. On the following pages are the names of 500 hundred women who have been identified as artists. Aspiring women artists can now receive artistic training equivalent to that of men.

ARTISTS' QUOTES

Answer Guide

MAYA YING LIN

"I'm interested in the collective memory of history...and how art really deals with a country's conscience—art and memorialization in the 20th century, as a passage of an individual coming to terms with facts."

JENNY HOLZER

"For the art to be successful, and for that matter, for the content to be compelling, the subject must be presented in a way that's appropriate. Appropriate means that formal considerations have been attended to, that they are as marvelous as the message. That's what the artist has to shoot for, and that's what the critics need to recognize and describe."

MARY ELLEN MARK

"You feel guilty because these people have really given you something incredible. No photographer can do anything without people letting them take something from them."

FAITH RINGGOLD

"There were a lot of stories....And there are all these people who won't tell it to the group but they come up after and tell me the story....The story-telling performance is powerful and important."

ISABEL BISHOP

"All art is metaphor....Technique all by itself won't take you where you want to go. There has to be the struggle of something deeper. It isn't a question of how you rendered something. It's much deeper than that."

MARIA MARTINEZ

"A long time ago, when my aunt taught me to make pottery, she told me something. She said that pottery-making belongs to everybody. Everyone who came to her and wanted to learn to make pottery, she taught. She said that was the way it was supposed to be. I want to do things right, the way she told me."

KÄTHE KOLLWITZ

"...the mother letting her dead son slide into her arms. I might make a hundred such drawings and yet I do not get any closer to him."

ALICE NEEL

"A good portrait of mine has even more than just the accurate features. It has some other thing. If I have any talent in relation to people, apart from planning the whole canvas, it is my identification with them. I get so identified when I paint them, when they go home I feel frightful. I have no self—I've gone into this other person".

WOMEN ART HISTORY ACTIVITIES:

1. NAME THE ARTISTS

Read the History of Women Artists overview. Next, draw five columns on the chalk board and label each with the dates 1500s, 1600s, 1700s, 1800s, and 1900s. Have your students copy a similar grid on a sheet of paper. Ask them to list the names of as many women artists they know and put them in the appropriate columns according to their life dates. Then ask them to list the names of any male artists they know. To discuss the results, ask questions like: Do you know the names of more women or men artists? If so, why do you think that is the case? What kind of information do you know about the women artists? What kind of information do you know about the men artists? Where do you learn about men and women artists?

2. RESEARCH AN ARTIST

Show your students the list of women artists provided in the program. Duplicate the list for your students if you choose. Ask each student to select a woman artist from the list and have them research and write a report on her, using the format suggested in the instructional strategies for art history. A bibliography on women artists is provided in the last section of this resource.

3. WHO SAID IT?

Duplicate the page of quotes by the artists. Duplicate the page enough times so that each student in your class has a quote. Laminate them if you wish and cut them apart. Display all eight of the fine art reproductions. Ask each student to read their quote and find the artist who said it. Encourage them to look for clues in the work and clues in the language that are similar. Have them play their card next to the image they believe was made by the artist who made the statement. After all of the cards are played ask students to turn them over. Examine how the cards were played. Ask students questions like:

1. Why did you play your quote on that image?
2. What visual and language clues did you find?
3. What is similar about the quote and the image?
4. Can you rephrase the meaning of the artist's statement in your own words?
5. How would you explain the meaning to someone else?
6. Do you know other artists who share the same philosophy?

If students played their cards incorrectly ask them to explain the reasoning behind their choices.

NOTE: Increase the challenge factor by including fine art reproductions from other artists.

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4. CREATE A TIMELINE

Have your students collect various images of artworks produced by women. Have them organize their images into a timeline. Display the timeline in your classroom and encourage students to continue to add images throughout the year.

5. WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The work of art titled *The Jolly Companion* was attributed to Franz Hals. It was considered to be one of his finest works and sold for a considerable amount of money. The museum that purchased it decided to have the painting cleaned. When they removed the frame, they discovered the initials "J.L." in the corner of the work, which was actually painted by Judith Leyster. It was devalued in worth because it was discovered that it was painted by a woman. To discuss this issue ask your students questions like:

1. What are the factors that determine the value of a work of art?
2. Is the name of the artist important in determining value?
3. In the case of Judith Leyster's work, should the fact that she was not Franz Hal change the value the painting? Why or why not?

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[1] Gornick and Barbara K. Moran, eds., Woman in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness (New York: Basic Books, 1971).

[2] This synopsis has been condensed from: Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin, Women Artists, 1550-1950 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980) 12-67. Read for more in-depth information on famous women artists in each century.

[3] Whitney Chadwick, Women, Art and Society (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1990) 297-365

The following posters were produced circa 1987 and distributed by an anonymous group of women artists known as "The Guerrilla Girls":

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING A WOMAN ARTIST:

Working without the pressure of success.
Not having to be in shows with men.
Having an escape from the art world in your 4 free-lance jobs.
Knowing your career might pick up after you're eighty.
Being reassured that whatever kind of art you make it will be labeled feminine.
Not being stuck in a tenured teaching position.
Seeing your ideas live on in the work of others.
Having the opportunity to choose between career and motherhood.
Not having to choke on those big cigars or paint in Italian suits.
Having more time to work after your mate dumps you for someone younger.
Being included in revised versions of art history.
Not having to undergo the embarrassment of being called a genius.
Getting your picture in the art magazines wearing a gorilla suit.

Please send $ and comments to: **GUERRILLA GIRLS** CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

WHEN RACISM & SEXISM ARE NO LONGER FASHIONABLE, WHAT WILL YOUR ART COLLECTION BE WORTH?

The art market won't bestow mega-buck prices on the work of a few white males forever. For the 17.7 million you just spent on a single Jasper Johns painting, you could have bought at least one work by all of these women and artists of color:

Bernice Abbott
Anni Albers
Sofonisba Anguisolla
Diane Arbus
Vanessa Bell
Isabel Bishop
Rosa Bonheur
Elizabeth Bougereau
Margaret Bourke-White
Romaine Brooks
Julia Margaret Cameron
Emily Carr
Rosalba Carriera
Mary Cassatt
Constance Marie Charpentier
Imogen Cunningham
Sonia Delaunay
Elaine de Kooning
Lavinia Fontana
Meta Warwick Fuller
Artemisia Gentileschi
Marguerite Gerard
Natalia Goncharova
Kate Greenaway
Barbara Hepworth
Eva Hesse
Hannah Hoch
Anna Huntingdon
May Howard Jackson
Frida Kahlo
Angelica Kauffman
Hilma of Klimt
Kathe Kollwitz
Lee Krasner
Dorothea Lange
Marie Laurencin
Edmonia Lewis
Judith Leyster
Barbara Longhi
Dora Maar
Lee Miller
Lisette Model
Paula Modersohn-Becker
Tina Modotti
Berthe Morisot
Grandma Moses
Gabriele Munter
Alice Neel
Louise Nevelson
Georgia O'Keeffe
Meret Oppenheim
Sarah Peale
Ljubova Popova
Olga Rosanova
Nellie Mae Rowe
Rachel Ruysch
Kay Sage
Augusta Savage
Vavara Stepanova
Florine Stettheimer
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Women Artists in History

This is a comprehensive list of women artists—it is not by any means complete.

WOMEN ARTISTS BEFORE THE 16TH CENTURY

Anastaise	(1400's)	Italian
Antonia	(1446-1491)	Italian
Aristarte	(?)	Greek
Claricia	(1100's)	German
dei Vigri, Caterina	(1413-1463)	Italian
Donella	(c.1271)	Italian
Ende	(c.975)	Spanish
Helena	(300's B.C.)	Greek
Rodiani, Honorata	(?-1452)	Italian
Iaia (Marcia)	(c. 90 B.C)	Italian
Kalypso	(200's B.C.)	Greek
Kora	(600's B.C.)	Greek
Olympias	(?)	Greek
Timarete (Thamyris)	(?)	Greek
Queen Aelfflaed	(active 909-916)	British

SIXTEENTH CENTURY WOMEN ARTISTS (1500s)

Anguissola, Lucia	(c.1540-c.1565)	Italian
Anguissola, Sofonisba	(1532/35-1625)	Italian
de'Rossi, Properzia	(c.1490-1530)	Italian
Di Spilmberg, Irene	(c.1540-1560)	Italian
Fontana, Lavinia	(1552-1614)	Italian
Ghisi, Diana	(1530-1590)	Italian
Longhi, Barbara	(1552-1638)	Italian
Nelli, Suor Plautilla	(1523-1587/88)	Italian
Robusti, Marietta Tintoretto	(c.1556-1590)	Italian
Teerlinc, Levina	(c.1520-1576)	Flemish
van Hemessen, Caterina	(1527/28-c.1566)	Flemish
Von Steinbach, Sabina	(?-1587)	German

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY WOMEN ARTISTS (1600s)

Beale, Mary	(1632-c.1699)	British
Caffi, Margherita	(Active 1662-1700)	Italian
Cheron, Elizabeth	(1648-1711)	French
de Ayala, Josefa	(1630-1684)	Spanish
de Boulogne, Genevieve	(1645-1708)	French
de Boulogne, Madeleine	1645-1708)	French
de Court, Suzanne	(c.1600)	French
de Heer, Margaretha	(c.1650s)	Dutch
del Pò, Teresa	(1649-1716)	Italian
Duchemin, Catherine	(1630-1698)	French
Fetti, Lucrina	(Active c. 1614-c.1651?)	Italian
Galizia, Fede	(1578-1630)	Italian
Garzoni, Giovanna	(1600-1670)	Italian
Gentileschi, Artemisia	(c.1593-1652/53)	Italian
Inglis (Anglois), Esther	(1571-1624)	British
Johnston, Henrietta	(1670-1728)	American
Koerton, Joanna	(1650-1715)	Dutch
Leyster, Judith	(1609-1660)	Dutch
Merian, Sibylla Maria	(1647-1717)	Dutch
Moillon, Louise	(1610-1696)	French
Netscher, Constantijn	(1668-1723)	Dutch
Peeters, Clara	(1594-c.1657)	Flemish
Roldàn, Luisa Ignacia	(1656-1704)	Spanish
Rosse, Susan Penelope	(c.1652-1700)	British
Ruysch, Rachel	(1664-1750)	Dutch
Sirani, Elisabetta	(1638-1665)	Italian
Van Schurman, Anna Maria	(1607-1678)	Dutch
van Oosterwyck, Maria	(1630-1693)	Dutch
Wasser, Anne	(1676-1713)	Swiss

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EIGHTEENTH CENTURY WOMEN ARTISTS (1700s)

Beauclerk, Lady Diana	(1734-1808)	British
Bouliar, Marie Geneviève	(1762-1825)	French
Candidi Dionigi, Marianna	(1756-1826)	Italian
Capet, Marie Gabrielle	(1761-1817)	French
Carriera, Rosalba	(1675-1757)	Italian
Charpentier, Constance-Marie	(1767-c.1841)	French
Collot, Marie-Anne	(1748-1821)	French
Cosway, Maria	(1759-1838)	British
Dupare, Françoise	(1726-1778)	French
Gérard, Marguerite	(1761-1837)	French
Giroust-Roslin, Marie Suzanne	(1734-1772)	French
Guillemine-Benoist, Marie	(1768-1826)	French
Kauffmann, Angelica	(1741-1807)	Swiss
Krafft, Barbara	(1764-1825)	Germany
Labille-Guiard, Adélaïde	(1749-1803)	French
Lama, Giulia	(c.1685-1753)	Italian
Ledoux, Jeanne Philiberte	(1767-1840)	French
Lemoine, Marie Victoire	(1754-1820)	French
Lisiewska-Therbusch, Anna Dorothea	(1721-1782)	German
Loir, Marie Anne	(c.1715-after 1769)	French
Mayer, Constance	(1775/78-1821)	French
Mengs, Theresa Concordia	(1725-1808)	Bohemian
Mercier, Charlotte	(?-1762)	French
Navarre, Marie-Geneviève	(1737-1795)	French
Prestel, Mary Catherine	(1744-1794)	British
Read, Catherine	(1723-1778)	British
Seymour-Damer, Anne	(1748-1828)	British
Silvestre, Marie Catherine	(1680-1743)	French
Vallayer-Coster, Anne	(1744-1818)	French
Vigée-Lebrun, Marie Louise Elizabeth	(1755-1842)	French
Watson, Caroline	(1761-1814)	British

NINETEENTH CENTURY WOMEN ARTISTS (1800s)

Abbéma, Louise	(1858-1927)	French
Anderson, Sophie	(1823-1898)	British
Austin, Amanda Petronella	(1859-1917)	American
Auzou, Pauline	(1775-1835)	French
Bashkirtseff, Marie	(1859-1884)	Russian
Bauman, Leila T.	(Active c.1855-1870)	American
Beaux, Cecilia	(1855-1942)	American
Bilinska, Anna	(1858-1893)	Polish
Bond-Palmer, Frances Flora (Currier & Ives)	(1812-1876)	American
Bonheur, Rosa	(1822-1899)	French
Bracquemond, Marie	(1841-1916)	French
Bridges, Fidelia	(1834-1921)	American
Bush-Brown, Margaret	(1857-1944)	American
Butler, Lady Elizabeth	(1850-1933)	British
Byrne, Anne Frances	(1775-1837)	British
Cabot-Perry, Lilla	(1848-1933)	American
Cameron, Julia Margaret	(1815-1879)	British
Cassatt, Mary	(1844-1926)	American
Claudel, Camille	(1864-1943)	French
Clements, Gabrielle de Veaux	(1858-1948)	American
Davin-Mirvault, Mme.	(1773-1844)	French
Drolling, Louise Adéone	(1797-1831)	French
Duveneck, Elizabeth Lyman Boott	(1846-1888)	American
Ellenrieder, Marie	(1791-1863)	German
Emmet, Jane Erin	(1841-1907)	American
Emmet-Sherwood, Rosina	(1854-1948)	American
Fagnani, Nina	(c.1860-c.1898)	American
Fairchild-Fuller, Lucia	(1872-1924)	American
Fassett, Cornelia Adele	(1831-1898)	American
Foley, Margaret	(1827-1877)	American
Foss, Harriet Campbell	(1860-1938)	American
Gardner-Bouguereau, Elizabeth Jane	(1837-1922)	American
Godefroid, Marie Eléonore	(1778-1849)	French

Gonzalès, Eva	(1849-1883)	French
Goodridge, Sarah	(1788-1853)	American
Granbery, Henrietta Augusta	(Active 1850-1890)	American
Grandpierre-Deverzy, Adrienne Marie Louise	(1798-active to 1855)	French
Hale, Ellen Day	(1855-1940)	American
Hall, Anne	(1792-1863)	American
Haudebourt-Lescot, Antoinette Cecile	(1784-1845)	French
Hayllar, Edith	(1860-1948)	British
Hosmer, Harriet	(1830-1908)	American
Käsebier, Gertrude	(1852-1934)	American
Klumpke, Anna Elizabeth	(1856-1942)	American
Lander, Louisa	(1826-1923)	American
Lewis, Edmonia	(1844-c.1911)	American
Lownes, Anna	(Active 1884-1905)	American
Macdowell-Eakins, Susan	(1851-1938)	American
Mayer, Constance	(1775/78-1821)	French
McKenney, Henrietta Foxhall	(1825-1887)	American
Mongez, Angelique	(1775-1855)	French
Morisot, Berthe	(1841-1895)	French
Newton, Mary	(1832-1866)	British
Ney, Elisabet	(1833-1907)	German
Nourse, Elizabeth	(1859-1938)	American
Osborn, Emily Mary	(1834-?)	British
Pattison-Searle, Helen	(1830-1884)	American
Peale, Anna Claypoole	(1791-1878)	American
Peale, Margaretta Angelica	(1795-1882)	American
Peale, Mary Jane	(1827-1902)	American
Peale, Sarah Miriam	(1800-1885)	American
Pell, Ella Ferris	(1846-1922)	American
Peters-Russell, Clarissa	(1809-?)	American
Pinney, Eunice	(1770-1849)	American
Ream-Hoxie, Vinnie	(1847-1914)	American
Robbins, Ellen	(1828-1905)	American
Sargeant, Geneve Rixford	(1868-1957)	American
Schille, Alice	(1869-1955)	American
Schwartze, Therese	(1851-1918)	Dutch
Sharples, Ellen	(1769-1849)	British
Sharples, Rolinda	(1794-1838)	British
Siddal, Elizabeth Eleanor	(1834-1862)	British
Spencer, Lilly Martin	(1822-1902)	American
Stanhope, Adela Elizabeth	(1859-1912)	British
Stebbins, Emma	(1815-1882)	American
Stephens, Alice Barber	(1858-1932)	American
Stuart, Jane	(1812-1888)	American
Titcomb, Mary Bradish	(1856-1927)	American
Valadon, Suzanne	(1865-1938)	French
Villers, Mme	(Active late 1700-1800's)	French
Whitney, Anne	(1821-1915)	American

TWENTIETH CENTURY WOMEN ARTISTS (1900s)

Abakanowicz, Magdalena	(1930-)	Polish
Abbott, Berenice	(1898-1991)	American
Acheson, Alice Stanley	(1895-)	American
af Klint, Hilma	(1862-1944)	Swedish
Albers, Anni	(1899-)	German
Almy, Max	(1948-)	American
Anderson, Laurie	(1947-)	American
Antin, Eleanor	(1935-)	American
Apel, Marie	(1880-1970)	British
Applebroog, Ida	(1929-)	American
Arbus, Diane	(1923-1971)	American
Attie, Dotty	(1938-)	American
Aycock, Alice	(1946-)	American
Baber, Alice	(1928-1982)	American
Bailly, Alice	(1872-1938)	Swiss
Bartlett, Jennifer	(1941-)	American
Bean, Carolina Van Hook	(1879-1980)	American
Becker-Wegeli, Friedy	(1900-1984)	American

Beer, June	(1933-1986)	Nicaraguan
Bell, Vanessa	(1879-1961)	British
Benglis, Lynda	(1941-)	American
Bernstein, Sylvia	(1914-)	American
Birnbaum, Dara	(1946-)	American
Bishop, Isabel	(1902-1988)	American
Blackadder, Elizabeth	(1931-)	Scottish
Blumenthal, Lyn	(1949-)	American
Bontecou, Lee	(1931-)	American
Bossi, Erma	(1885-?)	Yugoslavian
Bothwell, Dorr	(1902-)	American
Bourgeois, Louise	(1911-)	American
Bourke-White, Margaret	(1904-1971)	American
Boyd-Allen, Marion	(1862-1941)	American
Brooks, Romaine	(1874-1970)	American
Brown, Joan	(1938-1990)	American
Browne, Margaret Fitzhugh	(1884-1972)	American
Brownscombe, Jennie Augusta	(1850-1936)	American
Buchanan, Nancy	(1946-)	American
Buckner, Barbara	(1950-)	American
Butterfield, Deborah	(1949-)	American
Callis, Jo Ann	(1941-)	American
Carlisle, Mary Helen	(active 1900-1925)	So. African
Carlson, Cynthia	(1942-)	American
Carr, Emily	(1871-1945)	Canadian
Carrera, Jewel	(1942-)	American
Carrington, Dora	(1893-1932)	British
Carrington, Leonora	(1917-)	British
Catlett, Elizabeth	(1919)	American
Chaibia	(1929)	Moroccan
Chamberlain, Lydia	(1923-)	American
Charleston, Linda	(1902-)	American
Chase, Doris	(1923-)	American
Chase, Louisa	(1951-)	American
Chase-Riboud, Barbara	(1939-)	American
Chernow, Ann	(1936-)	American
Chicago, Judy	(1939-)	American
Chino, Marie Z.	(?- 1982)	American
Chryssa	(1931-)	American
Clausen, Franciska	(1899-)	Danish
Clemins, Vija	(1939-)	Latvian
Cole, Phoebe	(1959-)	American
Condit, Cecilia	(1947-)	American
Connell, Clyde	(1901-)	American
Cosby-Stewart, Ethelyn	(1899-1975)	American
Critcher, Catherine C.	(1868-1964)	American
Crowder, Susan	(1934-)	American
Cunningham, Imogen	(1883-1976)	American
da Silva, Maria Elena Vieira	(1908-)	Portuguese
Dahl-Wolfe, Louise	(1895-)	American
Danforth-Page, Marie	(1869-1940)	American
Danziger, Joan	(1934-)	American
Davenport, Roselle	(1948-)	American
Davis, Nike (Monica Ojo)	(1951-)	Nigerian
Day, Wörden	(1916-1986)	American
de Kooning, Elaine	(1920-1989)	American
de Saint-Phalle, Niki	(1930-)	French
de Senlis, Séraphine	(1864-1934)	French
Dehner, Dorothy	(1908-)	American
Delaunay, Sonia	(1885-1979)	Russian
Dreier, Katherine S.	(1877-1952)	American
Eberle, Abastenia St. Leger	(1878-1942)	American
Efflatoun, Inji	(1924-1988)	Egyptian
Eisenberg, Wendy	(1931-)	British
Ellis, Deborah	(1939-)	American
Emmet, Lydia Field	(1866-1952)	American
Emmet-Rand, Ellen	(1876-1941)	American
Exter, Alexandra	(1882-1949)	Russian
Fasnacht, Heide	(1951-)	American
Feigenbaum, Harriet	(1939-)	American
Ferrara, Jackie	(1929-)	American

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Ferrell-Colton, Mary Russell	(1889-1971)	American
Ferrian, Marie	(1927-)	American
Fini, Leonor	(1908-)	French
Firestone, Susan	(1946-)	American
Fish, Janet	(1938-)	American
Fitzgerald, Harriet	(1904-)	American
Flack, Audrey	(1931-)	American
Foote-Hawley, Margaret	(1880-1963)	American
Fordyce-MacRae, Emma	(1887-1974)	American
Forrester, Patricia Tobacco	(1940-)	American
Frank, Mary	(1933-)	American
Frankenthaler, Helen	(1928-)	American
Freckelton, Sondra	(1936-)	American
Freilicher, Jane	(1924-)	American
Frey, Viola	(1933-)	American
Friedman, Elizabeth	(1918-)	American
Frishmuth, Harriet Whitney	(1880-1979)	American
Fuller, Meta Warrick	(1877-1968)	American
Furman, Maggie	(1941-)	American
Gaal, Aniko	(1944-)	Hungarian
Gabriel, Ada V.	(1898-)	American
Gaye, Anta Germaine	(1954-)	Senegalese
Gechtoff, Sonia	(1926-)	American
Gilot, Françoise	(1921-)	French
Girouard, Tina	(1946-)	American
Goncharova, Natalia Sergeevna	(1881-1962)	Russian
Goulet, Lorrie	(1925-)	American
Graves, Nancy	(1940-)	American
Greeff, Adele	(1911-)	American
Grossman, Nancy	(1940-)	American
Hall, Lee	(1934-)	American
Hançke, Anna Marie	(1939-)	Yugo/Norway
Hanson, Ann	(1959-)	American
Hartigan, Grace	(1922-)	American
Hawkin-Israel, Linda	(1942-)	American
Heller, Eleanor	(1918-)	American
Hepworth, Barbara	(1903-1975)	British
Herreshoff, Louise	(1876-1967)	American
Hesse, Eva	(1936-1970)	American
Hill, Abby Rhoda Williams	(1861-1943)	American
Hirst, Claude (Claudine) Raguet	(1885-1942)	American
Hjertén, Sigrid	(1885-1948)	Swedish
Höch, Hannah	(1899-1978)	German
Hoffman, Malvina	(1887-1966)	American
Holt, Nancy	(1938-)	American
Holzer, Jenny	(1950-)	American
Horn, Rebecca	(1944-)	American
Hunter, Clementine	(1882?-1988)	American
Hyatt-Huntington, Anna	(1876-1973)	American
Ingram, Judith	(1970-)	American
Isham, Sheila	(1927-)	American
Ito, Wako	(1945-)	Japanese
Jackson, Sarah	(1924-)	Canadian
Jacquette, Yvonne	(1934-)	American
Jaramillo, Virginia	(1939-)	American
Jaudon, Valerie	(1945-)	American
Jessup, Georgia Mills	(1926-)	American
John, Grace Spaulding	(1890-1972)	American
John, Gwendolen	(1876-1939)	British
Jones, Elizabeth	(1935-)	American
Jones, Lois Mailou	(1905-)	American
Kahlo, Frida	(1910-1954)	Mexican
Keith, Elizabeth	(1887-1956)	American
Kerrigan, Maurie	(1951-)	American
Khayatt, Dora	(1910-)	Egyptain
King, Jessie Marion	(1875-1949)	Scottish
Klavans, Minnie	(1915-)	American
Klitgaard, Georgina	(1893-)	American
Klonarides, Carole Ann	(1951-)	American
Knight, Jennie Lea	(1933-)	American
Kohlmeyer, Ida	(1911-)	American

Kollwitz, Käthe	(1867-1945)	German
Kozloff, Joyce	(1942-)	American
Krasner, Lee	(1908-1984)	American
Kruger, Barbara	(1945-)	American
Kubota, Shigeko	(1937-)	Japanese
Labowitz, Leslie	(1946-)	American
Lacy, Suzanne	(1945-)	American
Laemmle, Cheryl	(1947-)	American
Lane, Lois	(1948-)	American
Lange, Dorthea	(1895-1965)	American
Larrabee, Constance Stuart	(1914-)	American
Lasch, Pat	(1944-)	American
Laurencin, Marie	(1885-1956)	French
Layton, Elizabeth	(1909-)	American
Lee, Doris Emrick	(1905-1983)	American
Leroy, Jeanette	(1928-)	French
Levine, Sherrie	(1947-)	American
Lewis, Lucy	(c.1897-1992/93)	American
Liebrovitz, Annie	(1949-)	American
Lin, Maya Ying	(1959-)	American
Logue, Joan	(1942-)	American
Longman, Evelyn Beatrice	(1874-1954)	American
Luce, Molly	(1869-1986)	American
Lucier, Mary	(1944-)	American
Lum, Bertha Boynton	(1879-1954)	American
Lundeberg, Helen	(1908-)	American
Mac Lane, Jean	(1878-1964)	American
MacDonald, Ellen	(1955-)	American
MacIver, Loren	(1909-)	American
Madeyska, Arika	(1935-)	Polish
Magafan, Ethel	(1916-)	American
Maher, Phyllis	(1945-)	American
Maldonado, Rocio	(1951-)	Mexican
Mangold, Sylvia	(1938-)	American
Manley, Edna	(1900-1987)	Jamaican
Marisol (Escobar)	(1930-)	American
Mark, Mary Ellen	(1941-)	American
Martin, Agnes	(1912-)	American
Martin, Mandy	(1952)	Australian
Martin, Mary	(1907-1969)	British
Martinez, Santana	(1909-)	American
Mascellani, Norma	(1909-)	Italian
Mason, Alice Trumbell	(1904-1971)	American
McCartney, Edith	(1897-1981)	American
McClure, Joan Y.	(1934-)	American
McEnery-Cunningham, Kathleen	(1885-1971)	American
Mendieta, Ana	(1948-1985)	Cuban
Messager, Annette	(1943-)	French
Miller, Melissa	(1951-)	American
Miss, Mary	(1944-)	American
Mitchell, Joan	(1926-1993)	American
Modersohn-Becker, Paula	(1876-1907)	German
Montano, Linda	(1942-)	American
Montoya-Martinez, Maria	(c. 1887-1980)	American
Morton, Ree	(1936-1977)	American
Moses, Anna Mary Robertson (Grandma)	(1860-1961)	American
Moss, Marlow	(1890-1958)	British
Munro, Roxie	(1945-)	American
Münter, Gabriele	(1877-1962)	German
Murphy, Catherine	(1946-)	American
Murray, Elizabeth	(1940-)	American
Musoke, Theresa	(1945-)	Ugandan
Myers, Rita	(1947-)	American
Nampeyo	(1856-1942)	American
Nauen, Clara Anna-Marie	(1880-1931?)	German
Neel, Alice	(1900-1984)	American
Nevelson, Louise	(1899-1988)	American
Nilsson, Vera	(1888-1979)	Swedish
Norton, Elizabeth	(1888-1985)	Amerian
O'Keeffe, Georgia	(1887-1986)	American
Oleszko, Pat	(1947-)	American

Olowu, Princess Elizabeth	(1945-)	Nigerian
Oppenheim, Méret	(1916-1986)	Swiss
Parsons, Betty	(1900-1982)	American
Partington, Gertrude	(1883-1959)	American
Pelton, Agnes	(1881-1961)	American
Pepper, Beverly	(1924-)	American
Peterson, Jane	(1876-1965)	American
Pfaff, Judy	(1946-)	British
Pindell, Howardena	(1943)	American
Piper, Adrian	(1948-)	American
Popova, Liubov Serbeevna	(1889-1924)	Russian
Porter, Katherine	(1941-)	American
Potter-Vonnoh, Bessie	(1872-1955)	American
Prax, Valentine Henriette	(1899-)	Algerian
Quintana, Georgina	(1956-)	Mexican
Rae, Barbara	(1943-)	Scottish
Redpath, Anne	(1895-1965)	Scottish
Reed, Ethel	(1876-?)	American
Reese, Jane	(1869-1961)	American
Reika, Iwami	(1927-)	Japanese
Rice-Pereira, Irene	(1902-1971)	American
Richardson, Constance Coleman	(1905-)	American
Richardson, Margaret Foster	(1881-c. 1945)	American
Richier, Germaine	(1904-1959)	French
Rifka, Judy	(1945-)	American
Riley, Bridget	(1931-)	British
Ringgold, Faith	(1930-)	American
Roberson, Pamela	(1947-)	American
Rockburne, Dorothea	(1934-)	Canadian
Rosenthal, Rachel	(1926-)	French
Rosler, Martha	(1943-)	American
Rothenberg, Susan	(1945-)	American
Rozanova, Olga Vladimirovna	(1886-1918)	Russian
Russell, Barbara	(1911-)	American
Ryan, Anne	(1889-1954)	American
Saar, Betye	(1926-)	American
Sage, Kay	(1898-1963)	American
Sao (Maria Da Conceicao)	(1946-)	Portuguese
Sarnoff, Lolo	(1916-)	Swiss
Sasaki, Tomiyo	(1943-)	British
Savage, Agusta	(1892-1962)	American
Schapiro, Miriam	(1923-)	American
Scudder, Janet	(1869-1940)	American
Shea, Judith	(1948-)	American
Sherman, Cindy	(1954-)	American
Shillinglaw, Fawn	(1944-)	American
Simmons, Laurie	(1949-)	American
Sinatoa, Pama	(1946-)	Malian
Sintenis, Renée	(1888-1965)	American
Skoglund, Sandy	(1946-)	American
Smith, Alexis	(1949-)	American
Smith, Barbara T.	(1931-)	American
Smith, Jaune Quick-to-see	(1940-)	American
Snyder, Joan	(1940-)	American
Solano, Susana	(1946-)	Catalan
Sparrow, Louise Kidder	(1884-1979)	American
Spero, Nancy	(1926-)	American
Stanton, Lucy May	(1875-1931)	American
Stavitsky, Ellen	(1951-)	American
Stein, Beatrice	(?-1961)	American
Steir, Pat	(1940-)	American
Stettheimer, Florine	(1871-1944)	American
Stevens, May	(1924-)	American
Taeuber-Arp, Sophie	(1889-1943)	Swiss
Tafoya, Margaret	(1904-)	American
Tanning, Dorothea	(1910-)	American
Tenneson, Joyce	(1945-)	American
Thomas, Alma W.	(1891-1978)	American
Thompson-Zorach, Marguerite	(1887-1968)	American
Truitt, Anne	(1921-)	American
Turner, Helen	(1858-1958)	American

Udinotti, Agnese	(1940-)	American
Underwood, Ethel B.	(active 1901-11)	American
Van Ness, Beatrice Whitney	(1888-1981)	American
van Heemskerck, Jacoba	(1876-1923)	Dutch
Varo, Remedios	(1913-1963)	Mexican/Spanish
Vasulka, Steina	(1940-)	Icelander
Velarde, Pablita	(1918-)	American
Venegas, German	(1956-)	Mexican
Vercelli, Gemma	(1912-)	Italian
Vicentini, Maria	(1934-)	Italian
Vidotto, Elena	(1931-)	American
Von Wiegand, Charmion	(1900-1983)	American
Walter, Martha	(1875-1976)	American
Watson-Schutze, Eva	(1867-)	American
Weems, Katherine Ward Lane	(1899-)	American
Weiss, Lee	(1928-)	American
Wenger, Susanne	(1915-)	Austrian
Werefkin, Marianne	(1860-1938)	Russian
Westcott-Hale, Lilian	(1881-1963)	American
Wharton, Margaret	(1943-)	American
Wheeler-Waring, Laura	(1887-1948)	American
Whitney, Gertrude Vanderbilt	(1875-1942)	American
Wilding, Alison	(1948-)	British
Wilke, Hannah	(1940-1993)	American
Williamson, Sue	(1941-)	So. African
Wilson, Jane	(1924-)	American
Wilson, Martha	(1947-)	American
Winsor, Jackie	(1941-)	American
Wolfson, Marbet Maize	(1952-)	American
Yamaguchi, Yuriko	(1956-)	Japanese

Student Worksheet

"I'm interested in the collective memory of history....and how art really deals with a country's conscience—art and memorialization in the 20th century, as a passage of an individual coming to terms with facts."	"All art is metaphor....Technique all by itself won't take you where you want to go. There has to be the struggle of something deeper. It isn't a question of how you rendered something. It's much deeper than that."
"For the art to be successful, and for that matter, for the content to be compelling, the subject must be presented in a way that's appropriate. Appropriate means that formal considerations have been attended to, that they are as marvelous as the message. That's what the artist has to shoot for, and that's what the critics need to recognize and describe."	"A long time ago, when my aunt taught me to make pottery, she told me something. She said that pottery-making belongs to everybody. Everyone who came to her and wanted to learn to make pottery, she taught. She said that was the way it was supposed to be. I want to do things right, the way she told me."
"You feel guilty because these people have really given you something incredible. No photographer can do anything without people letting them take something from them."	"....the mother letting her dead son slide into her arms. I might make a hundred such drawings and yet I do not get any closer to him."
"There were a lot of stories....And there are all these people who won't tell it to the group but they come up after and tell me the story....The story-telling performance is powerful and important."	"A good portrait of mine has even more than just the accurate features. It has some other thing. If I have any talent in relation to people, apart from planning the whole canvas, it is my identification with them. I get so identified when I paint them, when they go home I feel frightful. I have no self—I've gone into this other person".

Instructional Strategies

Art Criticism

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR

This instructional guide offers strategies for the introduction and implementation of art criticism theory and practice in the classroom. The suggestions are designed to be used with all of the units. The notes from the literature present a brief summary of the philosophy upon which this program is based.

NOTES FROM THE LITERATURE

"Art criticism seeks to inform and educate people (including artists) about art, by providing insights into its meaning so as to increase the understanding and appreciation of art and illuminate the cultural and societal values reflected in it."[1]

"People look at artworks and experience the impact of visual properties and qualities in the works. Those who cultivate this ability to look at art, analyze the forms, offer multiple interpretations of meaning, make critical judgments, and talk or write about what they see, think and feel about art are doing art criticism."[2]

"Art criticism focuses upon the perception, description, analysis, interpretation and evaluation of works of art. It includes the basic observation, scrutiny and report by artists, viewers, scholars and others who encounter works of art to help them know and understand what is presented by the visual form...There are two basic settings for art criticism: (1) Journalistic—the descriptive reviews of art exhibitions in galleries and museums that appear in newspapers and popular magazines, on radio and television and are addressed to the general public; and (2) Scholarly—in-depth interpretive essays published in specialized, scholarly and professional forums, such as journals and magazines or reported at seminars and conferences."[3]

Meaningful experiences with works of art take time. Research shows that for many people, the experience of looking at and responding to works of art is a hurried one. Whether you are a naive or educated observer, the average time people usually look at a work is ten to fifteen seconds.[4] It is safe to say that most artists work longer than fifteen

seconds to create their art. Therefore to help your students understand a work of art, slow their processes of looking and provide them with a structured way of perceiving images.

The following is a brief synopsis of what Edmund B. Feldman and Gene Mittler say about the purpose and implementation of art criticism in the classroom.

Edmund B. Feldman: [5]

The chief goal of art criticism is understanding. Art criticism is speaking and writing about works of art. To accomplish this goal Feldman suggests using the processes of description, analysis, interpretation and judgment.

Description is a process of taking an inventory of the work of art, noting what is immediately presented to the viewer.

Analysis is a process of determining the relationship among the visual qualities in a work of art.

Interpretation is the process of determining the meaning of the work of art.

Judgment is the process of determining the degree of artistic merit in the work. This final process involves decision-making.

The processes of description and analysis are tied to the processes involved in observation. When describing and analyzing a work of art, students should be able to point to actual objects or visual elements in the work of art which can be perceived by any viewer. For example, responses like "this is a coat", "the color is red" or "this color is more saturated than any other color in this work" are descriptive and analytical statements.

Interpretation and judgment reflect the knowledge gained through observation but require further support. They require the application of sound reasoning to the evidence accumulated through description and analysis. Interpretations can be more or less plausible and judgments can be more or less informed. Interpretive responses are often influenced by life experiences and the feelings and values of the viewer. By interpreting visual elements and symbols in a work, students are often able to determine the meaning. The perceived meaning is a hypothesis or an educated guess. When judging works of art, students are asked to state criteria which are supported by sound reasoning and to determine the merits of a work.

Gene Mittler:[6] Art criticism is a structured approach of looking at and talking about art. The processes of art criticism are meant (1) To provide an opportunity for students to freely express their own opinions and feelings in class without concern for right and wrong answers. (2) To allow students to become aware of and gain skill in applying a decision-making process to their encounters with art (visual stimuli). The teacher guides the students through the questioning process which allows students to discover the answers themselves using the structured way of looking and talking about works of art.

Mittler's system is similar to Feldman's, but with an additional component which called *phenomenological objectivity*. Phenomenological objectivity limits the viewer's responses to a work of art to that which can be perceived and verified through the senses. That is, the viewer relates to the work of art only on the basis of what can be

seen in the work. Everything that is perceived in a work of art is viewed as information that supports interpretation. Working in such a way presents opportunities for students to identify the qualities in a work of art and interpret its meaning from direct experience, without the use of outside sources or experts. Mittler contends that this process provides students opportunities to temporarily disregard historical information and to focus completely on the work of art.

Mittler believes that the criteria for judgment are gleaned from the three processes of description, analysis and interpretation. For example, statements like, "the artist painted what is in the real world", "the artist selected hues which express and support his or her intent", "the color combination is very complex and it took skill to mix the colors" and "the idea is expressed very well", present possible criteria used to judge the merits of the work of art.

In addition, Mittler suggests the use of Confirmation Check. A Confirmation Check provides additional information from outside resources and helps students gain more understanding and modify their hypothesis if necessary. After the class interprets the work, the name, date and artist are given and the Confirmation Check is read. The student's hypotheses are confirmed or checked by art experts such as art historians, art critics, artists or aestheticians. The most important attributes of a work of art are not the title, artist and date, but the idea and the intent of the artist.

ART CRITICISM WITH THE CLASS:

The following objectives apply in general to each of the units in the program.

OBJECTIVES

Students Learn To:

- describe and analyze the elements of art in works of art
- interpret the social meaning of works of art
- make informed judgments about works of art based on various criteria
- seek confirmation concerning works of art from outside resources (art experts: artists, historians, critics and aestheticians).

TO PREPARE

1. Carefully read the biographical information in the Art History section about the artist you have selected. This information is provided to assist you in the presentation of the historical and biographical information about the artist.
2. Read the Art Criticism section on the reproduction of the artwork by the artist you have selected. Look at the art reproduction while reading this section.
3. Familiarize yourself with the questions you will ask your students and the guided responses provided in each unit to support your students as they discuss the image.

4. Display the reproduction provided with the unit.
5. Duplicate the Art Vocabulary List to support your students' discussion and written assignments.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

6. Collect and display additional reproductions of the artist's work. Postcards, calendars, or posters are good sources.
7. Make a bulletin board and arrange the art reproduction, other visuals, a list of stylistic characteristics of the artist's work, quotes from the artist and vocabulary and definitions that are presented in the unit.
8. Use the bulleted articles or books in the bibliography for additional support material.

TO BEGIN

1. Distribute and review the Art Vocabulary List with your students.
2. Gather your students close to the reproduction. It encourages thoughtful viewing and discussion.
3. Introduce the four processes of description, analysis, interpretation and judgment. Discuss the role of the art critic. Explain to your students that they, like the critic, will help themselves and others to appreciate works of art through careful looking, thinking and speaking.

Description—Begin the discussion with your students by asking questions that require them to describe the work of art. For example, ask them to name everything they see in the work. This is the process of taking inventory. Encourage students to point to the objects or shapes as they are describing them. Eventually, when all responses have been exhausted, continue with questions that direct the students attention to the possible date, media and techniques used by the artist. As your students describe what they see, it is important that their statements are visually supported by the artwork. In some works of art, objects may appear to be ambiguous due to the lack of detail. When this occurs statements like "it might be a hat or it might be a purse or it might be a powder puff container" are all appropriate comments (these objects are all circular). An inappropriate comment would be a comment that can not be supported by the work. After your students have taken a careful inventory of the work proceed to analysis.
Note: When describing nonobjective works of art, a description might sound like," I see three circles, four rectangles and two lines."

Analysis is the examination of the relationship of the elements and principles to one another in a work of art. To encourage analytical viewing ask your students questions about the colors, shapes, forms, lines and textures in the work. Some examples would be, "what colors are in this work?" or "are the shapes organic or geometric?" The student then responds by answering the question and pointing to the visual evidence in the work. Next, ask questions about the principles used to compose works of art such as repetition and contrast. Continue asking questions as your students become increasingly familiar with the ways in which the artist has organized the work of art. Encourage your students to look for the dominant elements or principles used by the artist. Remember,

your students are to look for the relationship of elements and principles to one another in the work of art.

Interpretation involves looking at the meaning of a work of art. It is important to ask students what they think the artwork means. Without the title or any other information, your students will be able to make informed guesses about meaning using their perceptual skills and the information they have gleaned from the other processes of art criticism. Interpretations need to be supported by reference to the visual clues in the artwork. Cultural meaning for color and the size or direction of an object in relationship to other elements might be mentioned. A statement like "this is a war plane" when considering the image of a seated girl holding her dog is inappropriate. After your students have thoroughly discussed the meaning, give the title, artist and date of the artwork.

Confirmation Check

The confirmation is provided in each unit. This additional information from outside resources is provided for your students to modify their hypotheses if necessary and to better understand the context in which the artwork was produced. For further support or information you may wish to use additional outside sources—books, movies, videos, art magazines and art reviews provided by art historians, art critics, artists or aestheticians.

Judgment determines the artistic merit of a work. Questions that encourage judgment ask for criteria. As students express their judgments about a work of art ask them to note the criteria and give reasons for their opinions. Encourage your students to consider a variety of different criteria when discussing works of art. Some criteria may include the formal qualities, the expressive content or the function of the work in society.

After you have completed the discussion about the image with your students, assign one or more of the additional art criticism activities provided in each unit.

Note: After you have lead several discussions using the suggested structure, you may wish to vary the process by dividing your class into small groups or ask students to work alone. If so, provide your students with an art reproduction and paper to write their responses. Check your students' progress and serve as a resource if necessary.

One of the benefits of working with students in this manner is the potential for continued learning after repeated experiences with a work of art. It is always possible to perceive a work differently and learn something new.

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[1] Gilbert A. Clark, Michael D. Day and W. Dwaine Greer, "Discipline-based Art Education: Becoming Students of Art," Discipline-based Art Education: Origins, Meaning, and Development, ed. Ralph A. Smith (Chicago, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1989) 154.

[2] Stephen Mark Dobbs, The DBAE Handbook: An Overview of Discipline Based Art Education (Santa Monica, Cali.: J. Paul Getty Trust, 1992) 21.

[3] Dobbs 72.

[4] Guy Thomas Buswell, How People Look at Pictures: A Study of the Psychology of Perception in Art. (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1935).

[5] Edmund B. Feldman, The Varieties of Visual Experience: Art as Image and Idea. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall) 612-660.

[6] Gene A. Mittler, Art Education Oct. 1976: No. 6 15-17.

Art Vocabulary List

COLOR

Color/Hue
Color is the distinct visual quality created by the brain as it distinguishes the different characteristics of light waves.

Saturation/Intensity
Saturation is the degree of intensity of a color. Colors can be more or less saturated.

Brightness/Value
Brightness, or value, is reflected light from a surface apart from the color—white being the most bright and black being the least bright. The addition of black, gray or white to a given color changes that colors value. A color that has been mixed with white is a *tint*, with gray is a *tone* and with black is a *shade*. Values appear to be more bright or less bright depending on the amount of white, gray or black added.

COLOR STRUCTURES (COMBINATIONS)

Primary colors are red, blue and yellow; when mixed, they will produce the secondary colors.
Secondary colors are violet, green and orange.
Complimentary colors are red/green; yellow/violet and orange/blue; these colors are opposite each other on the color wheel.
Tertiary/Intermediate colors are combinations of red-orange, yellow-orange, yellow-green, blue-green, blue-violet and red-violet.
Monochromatic colors are produced when various amounts of white, gray or black are added to a single hue to produce a range of values (light blue, medium blue, blue, dark blue, navy).
Warm colors are red, yellow and orange.
Cool colors are blue, violet and green.
Analogous colors are any three colors next to one another on the color wheel (red, red-orange, orange).

SHAPE/FORM

Shape is two-dimensional (width and length). It is a closed figure: shapes are organic or geometric and natural or man-made.

Form is three-dimensional (width, length and depth). It is a closed figure; forms are organic or geometric and natural or man-made.

Geometric shapes are shapes with straight edges (triangles, squares, rectangles, pentagons, hexagon, etc.). The circle, an exception to the rule, is also a geometric shape.

Organic shapes are shapes with curvilinear edges (leaf shapes, heart shapes, apple shapes, human shapes, bell shapes, amorphous shapes, etc.).

Geometric forms are three-dimensional variations of geometric shapes (cones, spheres, pyramids, cubes, rectangular prisms, cylinders, etc.).

Organic forms are three-dimensional variations of organic shapes (human forms, leaf forms, heart forms, etc.).

LINE

Line is the path of a moving point (open ended). Lines can be short, long, straight, curved, thick, thin, etc.

TEXTURE

Texture is the tactile surface characteristic of an object.

Apparent texture is the appearance of a tactile surface characteristic in a work of art. The texture may appear to be rough, silky, smooth, satiny, metallic, soft, lumpy, wrinkled, etc.

REPETITION

Repetition is when an element (color, shape, form, line, texture) occurs over and over in a work of art.

DEPTH/SPACE

Aerial-perspective Produces a sense of depth in a painting by imitating the effect of atmosphere whereby objects look paler and bluer the further away they are from the viewer.

Overlap occurs when a color, shape, form, line or texture appears to be in front of another element.

Size relationship is the way in which objects in a composition are manipulated to appear closer or further away. Objects that are larger appear to come forward and objects that are smaller appear to be further away.

Gradation occurs when an element (color, shape, form, line, texture) is gradually changed in stages or steps in the work. An example is a gradual change in brightness or color (light blue to medium blue to dark blue, etc.).

CONTRAST

Contrast is the result of the presence of two opposing elements (black and white, curved and angular, thick and thin, smooth and rough, etc.).

POINT OF INTEREST

Point of interest occurs in a work of art when the similarity, proximity or continuity of any element or principle is disrupted with some new and different element or principle. This disruption produces a new figure which becomes the point of interest that the viewer perceives.

Art History

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR

This instructional guide offers strategies for the introduction and implementation of art history theory and practice in the classroom. The suggestions are designed to be used with all of the units. The notes from the literature present a brief summary of the philosophy upon which this program is based.

NOTES FROM THE LITERATURE

"Art history is the branch of knowledge or learning that involves the investigation and interpretation of works of art. "[1]

"Art historians investigate the visual arts of all sorts, those of prehistoric and tribal groups as well as those of highly developed and traditional cultural centers. They aspire to describe, analyze, and interpret individual artworks by identifying the who, what, when, where and why, in short, their place in the scheme of history."[2]

"People can understand and value the contributions of art in society and culture by exploring art in a variety of historical contexts and recognizing and appreciating the singular qualities of style developed by individual artists and schools (i.e., groups of artists who share similar concerns or who employ similar techniques). This enables art objects to be potentially understood both for the aesthetic qualities they possess and for the significant messages and values artworks carry across time and space to later generations and to other cultures. The pursuit of such study in understanding the multiple historical, cultural, and stylistic dimensions of works of art is art history."[3]

"Art history is the discipline that focuses upon the role of art and artists in culture and the history of art-making. Most individuals have not had an opportunity to learn very much about art history until college, since only token attention has ever been given to it in secondary schools and it has been almost totally neglected at the elementary school level. Art history provides the 'big picture', the historical context in which all artistic achievement is considered....As students study art history they learn about concepts and procedures that help the historian place a work

in its art historical context." The content and methods of inquiry are: attribution, connoisseurship, style, iconography, provenance, restoration and authentication."[4]

VIRGINIA FITZPATRICK[5]

Art historians work in basically two methods. Virginia Fitzpatrick defines the intrinsic and extrinsic methods of art history and discusses ideas for implementation in the classroom. She offers an approach to art history that is student-directed. In this approach, teachers serve as an assistant or resource for their students while they are engaged in the processes of art historical inquiry.

A. Formal art history (intrinsic) is information obtained from examination of an art object, the artist, and other sources related to the symbols contained in that object. The art historian concentrates on the art object, its subject, symbols, techniques, the materials used, the function for making it, and the authenticity of the artist, dates and origin or site. They question what can be observed in the work of art.

B. Contextual art history (extrinsic) is information from examination of the work of art, the artist, the artist's culture, and other social and personal influences on the creation of art. The art historian concentrates on a description and analysis of the work of art and then looks at information outside the work such as the artist's background, patronage system, economic, political, philosophical, religious and cultural factors that may have influenced the artist and therefore the appearance of the work. Each culture has a value system for art. The questions are: "Why is art created?" and "How does the culture value art?"

The purpose of either method of investigation is to develop a clear understanding of the artwork and its place in the history of art. When these methods are used by students the outcome is a change in perception. In a sense, art historians are like detectives. They ask questions, seek and weigh the evidence, analyze the information, identify influences and propose hypotheses regarding the appearance, purpose and authenticity of a work of art. The primary source of material is the artwork itself which is examined for this information. Other sources are the artist, art critics, aestheticians, anthropologists, archeologists or other art historians. Art historians write about artists, their life, their art and the influences that effected them.

Fitzpatrick suggests an approach to art history that is student-directed. Using her approach, the teacher serves as an assistant or resource to support the processes of inquiry for art history. Teaching art history provides an opportunity for students to develop their critical thinking skills by researching and justifying their interpretations. Art history information can be organized chronologically (time), thematically (themes), evolutionarily (style or artistic) or by comparing similar works.

The following is a structured method of engaging students in the processes of art historical inquiry.

- **Describe works of art.** Ask your students to look objectively at art works.

- **Construct questions for investigation.** Ask your students what they are interested in learning. Are they interested in learning more about the work of art, the artist, the social, political or religious influences on the artist or the context in which the art was made?
- **Locate resources.** Have your students search in many places for information. Some information can be found in the art disciplines—art history, art criticism, aesthetics, art production or in other disciplines—history, sociology, anthropology or archeology. Learning to find historical information in books, tapes, videos, movies, newspapers and periodicals about art develops and refines students' research skills.
- **Analyze the information.** Have your students analyze their sources and determine if they are primary or secondary sources. A *primary source* is any source created by the artist—an interview, an autobiography, correspondence, books, articles, journals, notebooks, diaries, or sketchbooks in unpublished or published form. A *secondary source* is any unpublished or published materials created by an individual other than the artist. It is possible your students may find conflicting or incorrect information that has been replicated several times. The best source is the primary source. If primary sources are not available, someone who has viewed the work, described it and put the work in context is valuable. Ask your students to analyze all available information into concise statements.
- **Present facts and opinions about artists and the context surrounding the creation of art.** Have your students study the writing of art historians and art critics to improve their own writing skills. Ask them to research art historical information and make oral or written presentations of their work. A suggested outline for a presentation could include important dates, family influences and education, artistic intent, societal influences and culture.

ART HISTORY WITH THE CLASS:

The following objectives apply in general to each of the units in the program.

OBJECTIVES

Students Learn:

- about an artist's life
- how life experiences (social, political, economical) influence an artist
- about an artist's media and technique
- about an artist's intent and the context of the work of art

TO PREPARE

1. Read the Art History Section on the artist you have selected. Synthesize or consolidate the information taking into account the developmental level of your students. Present the information in a way that best suits your needs. If you prefer, create an outline of the information provided in each unit or copy it for your students.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

1. Display a timeline in your classroom. Purchase a commercial timeline or create your own. If you choose to make your own chronological timeline, color postcards are good visual resources. Make signs to denote the years, styles of art and important historical events. Create mini-timelines to show the evolution of an artist's work or a particular style. Thematic timelines made with postcards which consist of works by different artists that convey meaningful ideas such as death, celebrations, hope, loneliness, self-portraits, landscapes or still-lifes are also useful.
2. Establish a filing-system to collect information on different styles of art, artists and periods of art. Include primary sources and secondary sources of information, such as, newspapers, periodical reviews (Artnews, Art in America, Newsweek, Time, New York Times, National Geographic or Smithsonian), interviews with artists (periodicals, tapes, movies or videos) and chapters from books or encyclopedias that contain pertinent information. Because this is an ongoing process ask students to help you gather information. Parents, librarians and museum educators are also often willing to help.
3. Begin a library of art history books and videos on individual artists.

TO BEGIN

1. Introduce the art historical process. Discuss the role of the art historian. Explain to your students that they will learn to use the same skills as the historian. Introduce or review any necessary vocabulary.
2. Introduce the concepts of primary and secondary sources.
3. Locate the time period of the artist you are introducing on the timeline.

ACTIVITY #1

1. Introduce the information about each artist in a lecture or story format.
2. Read the personal statements by the artist to your students and invite them to respond. Encourage questions and dialogue about the artist.
3. Discuss the life of the artist in relation to the political, social and economic conditions pertinent to the artist.
4. Ask your students to prepare a written or an oral description of the work of art you have selected for study.

ACTIVITY #2

1. Duplicate and distribute the handout "SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT ART HISTORY". Ask each student to select one or two topics to research.
2. Provide resources for your students. Use the historical information provided in the unit, additional information from your files and resources or send students to the library to look for additional sources. Ask students to analyze all of the information they have

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collected and select those sources that best support them in their research.

ACTIVITY #3

Select various art history books for your students to read. Ask them to choose a topic written by an art historian and write a report. A written assignment about an artist should include important dates, family influences and education of the artist, the artist's intent, cultural influences and pertinent political, economic and social factors. Styles and periods of art are also suitable topics.

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[3] Gilbert A. Clark, Michael D. Day and W. Dwaine Greer, "Discipline-based Art Education: Becoming Students of Art," Discipline-based Art Education: Origins, Meanings, and Development, ed. Ralph A. Smith (Chicago, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1989) 155.

[4] Clark 156.

[5] Stephen Mark Dobbs, The DBAE Handbook: An Overview of Discipline-Based Art Education (Santa Monica, Calif.: J. Paul Getty Trust, 1992) 21.

[6] Dobbs 74-75.

[7] Virginia L. Fitzpatrick, "Art History: A Contextual Inquiry Course," (Point of View Series), (Reston, Virg.: National Art Education Association, 1992) 30-48. This is an excellent synopsis of the history of art history, and the history of how art history has been taught in schools. Also includes art history inquiry lessons that are practical for every grade level from preschool through the 12th grade.

Sample Questions

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT ART HISTORY[1]

DESCRIPTION:

What is the subject matter? When was it created? What medium was used? What are its dimensions? What symbols are included in this work? What do they mean? What is its condition? Where is it?

TECHNOLOGY:

What inventions made this work possible? What techniques were used? Could this have been made in the same way 100 years ago?

ARTIST:

Who is the creator? Was anyone else involved in its creation? Where did the artist live when this was created? Why?

PURPOSE /INTENT OF THE ARTIST:

Why was this work created? What was its function? What was the intent of the artist? What has the artist said about it?

EDUCATION OF THE ARTIST:

Where was the artist educated? Was an influential teacher of importance to this artist's work? Were other artists involved in his or her education? What else did the artist study besides art?

CULTURE AT THE TIME OF CREATION:

What was the artist's culture? How did it affect the work? What was the political and economic climate in the artist's town? Were there other artists working nearby?

INFLUENCES AND COMMENTS OF OTHERS:

Was this work commissioned? By whom? How did others influence the artist? How was it valued at the time it was created?

Other questions might be: What is the title of this work? What does the title mean in relationship to the work of art? What were the cultural, political, economic and religious mores of the time? Are there any other artists past or present that pursued this theme? Is this work the first in a series? Is the work a turning point for the artist? Or is it the last work of art?

[1] Virginia L. Fitzpatrick, Art History: A Contextual Inquiry Course (Point of View Series) (Reston, Virg.: National Art Education Association, 1992).

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR Aesthetics

This instructional guide offers strategies for the introduction and implementation of aesthetic theory and practice in the classroom. The suggestions are designed to be used with all of the units. The notes from the literature present a brief summary of the philosophy upon which this program is based.

NOTES FROM THE LITERATURE

"The basic presupposition of aesthetics as a branch of philosophy is that our experiences of art - creating, appreciating, criticizing - involve basic human values and, as such, are worthy of serious inquiry."[1]

"Aesthetics is that branch of philosophical activities which involves the critical reflection on our experience and evaluation of art. Critical reflection consists in part of conceptual analysis and the formation of principles of interpretation, of critical reasoning, and of evaluation. Art-historical concepts such as style and innovation provide material for analysis, and art criticism affords examples of interpretation and evaluation. Thus the subject matter for aesthetic inquiry comes not only from creative and appreciative activities in the arts themselves but also from the disciplines of art history and art criticism."[2]

"People reflect upon the experience of art, its impact and meaning. Such judgments depend upon an understanding of art's meaning and value, the nature of art objects, and the elements that make the experience of art unique. Children as well as philosophers and social scientists are curious about and raise such questions; they are studying, even if with different vocabularies, the discipline of aesthetics."[3]

"Aesthetic discussion takes place in anthropology, psychology, sociology, and philosophy and looks at the nature of art and raises questions about its definition and significance. Aesthetics helps students learn to evaluate the basis upon which to make informed judgments about art. It also helps them to appreciate the complexities and subtleties of a variety of aesthetic experiences. Aesthetics includes the study of the special

qualities of the aesthetic experience and its unique contributions to human life and culture."[4]

"The stereotype about aesthetics is that it is conducted by philosophers who carry on an esoteric dialogue in universities. But the fact is that the kinds of questions that many types of aestheticians ask are like those school children ask. When a child says 'that picture is pretty,' he or she is making a critical statement. Some aestheticians examine how these statements might be justified."[5]

"Although students may discuss issues about art in a less sophisticated way and without technical jargon, the evidence is that they are interested in understanding why one object is called a work of art and is placed in a museum while others are not. The study of aesthetics helps answer such questions as: What is art? What is meant when one says something is beautiful or ugly? What is unique about the aesthetic experience? How do we and how do other people support or justify our judgments about the value and significance of art?"[6]

What is art? Harry S. Broudy states that art offers an unique form of experience—the aesthetic experience. He says, art creates "visual portraits of human feelings" that the viewer can observe and react to. These portraits of feeling provide us with knowledge of feelings. Also, these portraits convey a variety of values which relate to all other values society holds to be important such as health, religion, patriotism, citizenship, economics and family. Understanding the images of feelings created by artists and how they impact these value domains is the unique contribution that art education makes in schools.[7]

Each individual has an idea about what is art or what is not art, based on their own values. It is important for each individual to understand his or her personal viewpoint or stance. Louis Lankford states, "A person's concept of art can change over time due to increase in knowledge and skills, and shifts in attitudes and values. It is unlikely that any two people carry identical concepts of art."[8]

Aesthetics is the name of an area of inquiry in which people debate the nature of art and the value and function of art in society. It is an open-ended process "in that ideas and their relationships are always subject to additions and revisions....Questions in aesthetics seldom have absolute answers, although individuals may choose to accept one point of view as being more correct, complete, or profound than another."[9]

The concept of art is a set of closely related ideas which defines art and describes its artistic phenomena. These definitions are called art theories. Lankford says, "An art theory is a concept of art that has been carefully articulated by a philosopher of art."[10] It helps both the students and teacher to discuss how things are called art. Philosophers have tried to answer the question, "What is art?" for a long time. As art has changed so have the answers to this question. At no other time in history have the definitions or the theories of art had so many multiple viewpoints. Today, works of art are so diverse and change so fast that it is difficult for the aestheticians and others who consider these issues to provide one theory that covers all artwork.

Philosopher Morris Weitz suggests that the concept of art is an "open concept". He states that there is no definition for art because once art is defined it excludes everything else that might be art in the future. Therefore by its very nature, art is open-ended and creative. "The very expansive, adventurous character of art, its ever-present changes and

novel creations, make it logically impossible to insure any set of defining properties."[11] Weitz also wrote that art theories point to "family resemblance's", or characteristics which are useful as guidelines for what qualities to look for and are directly observable in the work. He believes that if one can identify the great exemplars for each theory of art, one could select other works of art with the same characteristics or similarities to be works of art.

Art works can be interpreted and judged using theoretical lenses or sets of criteria. The following list summarizes several theories or "family resemblance's", traditional and contemporary, which are commonly subscribed to today. Use these definitions to introduce the theories of art to your students.

AESTHETIC THEORIES[12]

- **Imitationalism** (literal qualities)—The most important thing about a work of art is the realistic presentation of subject matter. Those who hold this theory believe that a work is successful if it looks like and reminds us of what we see in the real world. These art forms can be literal or idealized. According to this theory, artworks are judged on correctness, completeness and convincingness. Other names for this theory of art are Mimetic or Realism.
- **Formalism** (visual qualities)—The most important thing about a work of art is the effective organization of the elements of art through the use of principles. Those who hold this theory believe that a work is successful if the composition or arrangement of colors, lines, shapes and their relationship to the principles elicits an aesthetic emotion or response. Form is more important than content. The phrase "art for art's sake" is associated with this theory. According to this theory, artworks are judged on the intrinsic satisfaction of the sensual properties which are arranged as an integrated composition.
- **Expressionism** (emotional qualities)—The most important thing about a work of art is the vivid communication of moods, feelings and ideas to the viewer. The basis for this theory is the belief that the expression of emotions is a natural and acceptable aim of artists. According to this theory artworks are judged on the power or intensity of their emotional content.
- **Instrumentalism** (functional qualities)—The most important thing about a work of art is that it serves a function. This function might be practical or ideological for furthering moral, religious, social, economic or political points of view. Instrumentalism is concerned with the consequences of art which serve a cause that goes beyond art, such as social concerns. The sayings "art for life's sake" or "form follows function" have their roots in this theory. According to this theory, artworks are judged on their effectiveness to influence the thoughts and actions of individuals in society.
- **Institutionalism** (contextual classification)—According to this contemporary theory, the most important thing about a work of art is the context in which an object exists and which determines whether or not it is art. This theory does not emphasize literal, visual, emotional, or functional qualities or the content in works of art. "When is it art?" is the question that is asked. When the

work is complete it must receive validation from the members of the artworld—art critics, art historians, aestheticians, art dealers, curators and patrons. It is the combined actions of these two groups that determine and confirm that an object is art: no single person or action is sufficient.[10] For example, in the 20th century, some artists have appropriated human-made or natural objects (rocks, leaves, soil, sticks, beds, urinals, bicycle wheels, broken glass, chairs) in their work. These objects, which are not usually considered art, may be validated by the art world to be so in the light of their new contextual setting. Both traditional and avant-garde works are acceptable by the ideas which surround and explain them.

The above theories are presented in summary format. They offer various lenses or viewpoints for valuing works of art. Use this information to introduce the theories to your students.

AESTHETICS WITH THE CLASS:

The following objectives apply in general to each of the units in the program.

OBJECTIVES

Students Learn To:

- examine various aesthetic theories
- ask the same type of questions asked by aestheticians
- listen to and analyze others' ideas during a discussion
- recognize that one's arguments about art usually reflect one's values and beliefs

TO PREPARE

1. Read the Aesthetics section on the artist you have selected. Artists struggle with many aesthetic issues. Familiarize yourself with the aesthetic issues that confronted the artist you are studying. As you discuss aesthetic issues with your class, your students will understand and appreciate a wider range of what is considered art.
2. Duplicate any work sheets. If possible, duplicate and enlarge the chart of aesthetic theories and definitions and display it in your classroom.
3. Duplicate the rules for dialogue and display it in your classroom.[11]
   a) I am critical of ideas, not people.
   b) I remember that we are all in this together.
   c) I encourage everyone to participate.
   d) I listen to everyone's ideas even if I do not agree.
   e) I ask someone to restate what was said if I do not understand.
   f) I try to understand all sides of an issue.
4. Look for outside sources, such as magazines and newspapers, that present aesthetic questions for discussion. An excellent source is the

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cartoon strip, "Calvin and Hobbs" by Bill Watterson who periodically deals with aesthetic issues.

TO BEGIN

1. Introduce or review the aesthetic theories presented in the instructional strategies. Give each student a handout of the aesthetic theories.
2. Discuss the rules for dialogue.
3. Present one or more of the aesthetic questions/activities provided in each unit.

AESTHETIC THEORIES

The following aesthetic theories present different viewpoints from which we can consider works of art. They are summarized below in language appropriate for your students. Introduce and/or review the theories if necessary.

IMITATIONALISM
Literal Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the realistic presentation of subject matter. A work is successful if it looks like and reminds us of what we see in the real world.

FORMALISM
Visual Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the effective organization of the elements of art through the arrangement of visual principles.

EXPRESSIONISM
Emotional Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the vivid communication of moods, feelings and ideas to the viewer.

INSTRUMENTALISM
Functional Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is that it serves a function that is practical or furthers moral, religious, social or political points of view.

INSTITUTIONALISM
Contextual Classification

The most important thing about a work of art is the context in which it exists and in which it is validated by the artworld.

Theories:

Imitationalism

Formalism

Expressionism

Instrumentalism

Institutionalism

[1] Gilbert A. Clark, Michael D. Day and W. Dwaine Greer, "Discipline-based Art Education: Becoming Students of Art," Discipline-based Art Education: Origins, Meanings, and Development, ed. Ralph A. Smith (Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1989) 228.

[2] Clark 229.

[3] Stephen Mark Dobbs, The DBAE Handbook: An Overview of Discipline-Based Art Education (Santa Monica, California: J. Paul Getty Trust, 1992) 22.

[4] Dobbs 75-76.

[5] Dobbs 76.

[6] Harry S. Broudy, The Role of Art in General Education, videotape, J. Paul Getty Trust.

[7] Broudy.

[8] E. Louis Lankford. "Aesthetics: Issues and Inquiry," (Point of View Series), (Reston, Virginia: National Art Education Association, 1992) 4-13. This is a synopsis of the information for the concept of art and art theories. This is an excellent book of art theories, definitions, values and structure for teachers and more in-depth aesthetic activities for different levels in the classroom. A good reference book for your library.

[9] Lankford 4-13.

[10] Lankford 4-13.

[11] Morris Weitz, "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 15 (Sep. 1956): 27-35.

[12] These theories of art have been developed utilizing the following sources: E. Louis Lankford, "Aesthetics: Issues and Inquiry," (Point of View Series); Marcia Eaton, Basic Issues in Aesthetics; and Terry Barrett, Criticizing Photographs.

[13] George Dickie, The Art Circle: A Theory of Art (New York: Haven Publications, 1984).

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INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR Art Production

This instructional guide offers strategies for the introduction and implementation of studio art production theory and practice in your classroom. The suggestions are designed to be used with all of the units. The notes from the literature present a brief introduction to the theory upon which this program is based.

NOTES FROM THE LITERATURE

"Throughout history the images of art have provided the record and expression of civilization. We turn to the arts when we wish to convey our most profound observations and values. Through the arts we imbue thought with feeling, plumb the mysteries of existence, record our tragedies and triumphs, and celebrate the joy of living."[1]

"Art production—the direct experience of creating art—uniquely leads to certain insights into the many aspects of meaning conveyed in works of art. Learning about materials, acquiring techniques, gaining perceptual skills, and developing imagination through resolving the ambiguity inherent in the creative process give students insight into both their own work and the world as well. In the processes necessary to develop and manipulate images in the production of art, we find avenues leading to a fuller understanding of all art."[2]

"Producing art is so valuable in the cultivation of these understandings and abilities because from conception to conclusion, it involves a range of human processes; these include thought, perception, feeling, imagination, and, importantly, action. Exercise of these processes contributes to their development and can lead to the sophisticated judgment and critical sensitivity needed to deal with today's complex visual stimuli and multimedia statements."[3]

"Art production is the discipline of art-making, the creative processes through which artists produce images in various materials to create desired visual effects....In the classroom or in the artist's studio it is appropriate for the teacher to raise questions with students about the

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artist and his or her work even while students practice the skills of art-making and create their own art."[4]

According to the work of Ellen Dissanyake, art "....is making things special or extraordinary." [5] It involves elaboration, play, unpredictability, novelty, surprise, ambiguity, ritual, embellishment, exaggeration, enhancement, care, concern and formalization. Art is an extraordinary object or activity that is different than ordinary activity.

The role and purpose of the artist in society is subject to diverse interpretations. Cultural values, technology, economic conditions, political structures and religion are some of the factors that create and define the role of the artist in society. In western European cultures the characteristics associated with being an artist are often synonymous with creativity, originality and individuality. As a result, many artists experience isolation by living their commitment to create art. This commitment involves an extraordinary amount of time and effort and many cases represents a life long endeavor. Each individual has their own characteristic style like each of us has our own particular handwriting.

In non-western societies art is often viewed as an expression of traditional values that are shared by the members of the community. In different cultures the value, meaning and symbols of art are judged by different criteria. In some cultures, the spoken language may not include the word to denote a specific object or activity as art, because the concept is completely integrated with all aspects of the culture.

Artists live their commitment to creating art in many different ways. Research shows that many artists read extensively, keep journals and diaries and create preliminary planning sketches as part of the process of developing their ideas and making art.

The art production component of each unit is composed of a Teacher's Art Production Guide and a Student Planning Guide. They are designed to be used simultaneously by you and your students.

ART PRODUCTION WITH THE CLASS:

The following objectives apply in general to each of the units in the program

OBJECTIVES

Students Learn To:

- integrate the elements and principles of art into a successful composition
- use visual symbols to express an idea with clear intent
- generate, analyze, and/or adjust original ideas
- practice, explore and work with a variety of techniques and materials

TO PREPARE

1. Read the art production guide for "For The Teacher, Art Production Guide" and the "Student Planning Guide". They are designed to be used simultaneously by you and your students.

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Teacher's Art Production Guide

• Content

The teacher's guide presents the information for preparation, materials, criteria, vocabulary, the implementation of the activity and assessment. The criteria for each lesson are based in the characteristics found in the artist's work featured in each unit. These characteristics are reflected in the visual properties of the work, the expressive content of the work and the media and techniques used by the artist. The purpose of using this approach in the art production component is to provide your students the opportunity to approach their own art making as artists. Through this artistic activity they explore and use a variety of visual properties, examine and express a broad range of themes through their art and work with a variety of media and techniques. Like artists, your students will draw upon these resources as they are involved in art making.

• Activities

These activities provide inspiration and motivation for the production of meaningful imagery. As the process of art making evolves your students will create plans, conduct research, tackle problems, create solutions, reflect on their progress and assess their learning. It is not the intent of this program to have students replicate or copy the work of artists but rather to use the concepts and methods of inquiry used by artists. Each unit presents your students with a challenge. Their solution is defined by specific criteria that guide their art making.

• Vocabulary

Vocabulary with definitions are included.

• Implementation

Suggestions for implementing the art production include ideas for brainstorming, research, planning, discussion, demonstrations, art-making, reflection and assessment. Each unit requires a commitment of time to complete these processes.

• Assessment

The assessment of student learning is an integral component of a comprehensive art program. The specific criteria stated in each unit provide the standards for assessment. Your students' oral and written work and their art products can be assessed and provide suitable content for portfolio evaluation. Based on the criteria, your students work can be assessed and used to gather information to measure against any rubric adopted by your district.

• Additional Ideas

Each unit also offers several additional ideas for future art production ideas.

Student Planning Guide

• Content

The Student Planning Guide is designed to assist students with the development of their ideas for art production. It is meant to serve as a bridge from an idea to a finished work of art. The activity and criteria that define the activity are presented to the students.

Questions that engage students in activities such as brainstorming, research, design, production and assessment are included. Students are asked to use the work sheet as a guide throughout the art production process. After they complete their work, a self assessment activity requires them to reflect on their learning and to make a personal evaluation of their work based on the stated criteria in each unit.

2. Duplicate as many Student Planning Guides as needed.
3. Prepare the necessary art materials
4. Collect additional resources such as more images, technical/media information and research materials if necessary
5. Plan your schedule to allow enough time for research, investigation, exploration, creation, reflection and assessment.

TO BEGIN

1. Create a context in your classroom for creativity, problem-solving, exploration, and commitment. Explain to your students that many artists read extensively, write letters, and keep journals and sketchbooks. These activities provide inspiration and motivation for the production of meaningful imagery. As the process of art making progresses artists create plans, conduct research when necessary, tackle problems, reflect on their progress and take advantage of mistakes or accidents. Explain to your students that they will use these processes as they work through each studio production activity.
2. Review each section of the guide and check for your student's understanding.
3. Present the criteria for the art production and assessment.
4. Discuss the media that is available for the art production
5. Guide your students through the art production process.
6. Assess your students' learning using the guidelines for assessment in each unit.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Use any of the following ideas to motivate and challenge your students before they begin their art making.

1. Ask your students to keep a daily art journal to record their thoughts and feelings about art and the role of the artist in society.
2. Have students create a list of social and/or political concerns that may provide ideas for art making.
3. Have students keep a growing a list of words that carry important meanings for them (example: family, loneliness, unemployment, optimism etc.)
4. Give written assignments that provoke, challenge, question and motivate ideas.
5. Create assignments that require research, interviews and presentations.

[1] Gilbert A. Clark, Michael D. Day, W. Dwaine Greer, "Discipline Based Art Education: Becoming Students of Art," Discipline Based Art Education: Origins, Meaning, and Development. (University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1987) 157.

[2] Clark 157.

[3] Clark 157-158.

[4] Stephen Mark Dobbs, The DBAE Handbook: An Overview of Discipline Based Art Education. (The J. Paul Getty Trust, Santa Monica, California, 1992) 71-72.

[5] Ellen Dissanyake, Homo Aestheticus: Where Art Comes From and Why. (New York: The Free Press, A Division of Macmillan, 1992) 42-56.

Isabel Bishop

Isabel Bishop

ART CRITICISM

IMAGE: Detail from On the Street (Fourteenth Street), 1932
LOCATION: Private collection
MEDIUM: Oil on canvas
Size: 14 1/2" x 16"

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art criticism before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn To:

- describe and analyze the elements of art in works of art
- interpret the meaning of works of art
- make informed judgments about works of art based on various criteria
- recognize and interpret the artist's intent

Organize your class for a discussion about the painting titled On the Street by Isabel Bishop. Display the art reproduction in a prominent place for viewing. Use the following questions to guide your students in an in-depth discussion. The possible responses that follow each group of questions are included to support the discussion.

DESCRIPTION:

QUESTIONS

Let's begin our discussion by listing everything we see in the work of art.

How many people are there?

What are the people wearing?

What are they carrying?

What is the environment surrounding them?

What other details are present?

What medium was used to create the work?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

On the Street is a scene portraying nine men and two women.

On the far right side, there is a man who seems to be walking in a hurry and skirting the crowd. He is wearing a hat, suit and a long coat.

To the left of the scurrying man is a fire hydrant and a group of three men.

One man, who is wearing a cap and suit with a vest or sweater, is staring up the street.

The man next to the man in the cap and suit has his back to the viewer. Holding a bag in one hand, he seems to be talking to a third man who has his hat off. Both of these men are wearing suits.

In the middle of the painting, two women are walking toward the viewer.

Both women are dressed in white dresses, high heels and hats.

The woman on the left is wearing a jacket.

The woman on the right is carrying what looks like two packages wrapped in paper. The other woman is looking through her purse searching for something.

To the left there are five more men who appear to be standing around and talking.

All of the men are dressed in similar fashions.

The sidewalk is made of squares that look like cement.

The background is composed of a series of buildings with different styles of architectural ornamentation on the front.

Behind the women, a haze of white steam is rising from a grate in the sidewalk.

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The artist did not paint with a great deal of detail, but rather, she created a suggestion or impression of the scene.

This is an oil painting.

ANALYSIS:

QUESTIONS

How would you analyze the colors?

Are there few colors or are there many?

How did the artist use the neutrals?

Are any of the colors saturated and intense? Unsaturated and dull?

Where are the brightest values?

Where are the softest values?

Do the values appear to create the illusion of depth? Where?

How do the colors repeat?

Did the artist create contrast in the image? If so, how?

What types of shapes are used? Geometric? Organic?

Do the shapes repeat? How? What is the effect of the repetition?

How do the shapes contribute to the illusion of depth?

Do any of the shapes overlap? What is the result of the overlapping?

What kinds of lines did the artist use? Are they straight, curved, thick or thin?

Are there a few lines or are there many? Do the lines repeat? How?

Is texture an obvious visual quality in this painting? Why or why not?

What is the focal point of this painting?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

The colors in this work are gold, brown, red, blue and neutrals of black, grays and white.

The neutrals are mixed with blue, red and yellow to produce brown, yellow-brown, blue-gray and grays.

Most of the hues are desaturated; the most saturated hue is the red sweater.

The brightest area is the dress of the woman on the right.

There is a wide range of values from the very light to the very dark which create the appearance of three dimensional form.

The lightest value is in the woman's dress. The darkest values are in the men's suits, both of which create the appearance of form.

The colors and values repeat throughout the painting.

The colors are very similar in hue and value which results in low contrast in the image except for the white dress and red sweater.

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The figures are made of complex human forms which are organic.

The buildings and the cement are made of a series of geometric rectangles. The rectangles repeat throughout the background and foreground.

The geometric and organic shapes repeat and contrast with one another.

The size of the shapes and forms get smaller as they recede in the background (the windows in the building in the foreground are larger than the windows in the background). This helps create the illusion of depth.

The figures and the buildings in the background overlap each other to convey depth.

There are curved and straight lines, short and long lines in this work of art.

The buildings are made with straight, vertical and diagonal lines. The lines consistently repeat and add to the illusion of depth.

The clothing textures are very different from the buildings. The clothing on the women appears to be softer and lighter than the men's suits and coats. The men's hats have a firm, stiff texture in contrast with their clothing.

Because the women are the brightest and are different from their surroundings they are the focal point or center of interest.

INTERPRETATION:

QUESTIONS

What are the people doing?

Why are there so many people in the street?

How are the women painted differently than the men?

What is the result of this difference?

Is this painting about an important idea?

What was the artist's intent?

What year was this painted? Can you tell by the clothing of the figures?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

The women appear to be walking through a group of men.

The men appear to be talking casually with each other.

The light colors of the female figures set them apart from the men and draw attention to them.

This is a busy street. The women appear to be moving and out of place. The men are static and seem oblivious to the women's presence. There is a contrast between the movement of the women and the static poses of the men.

The people in the painting represent the problems, concerns and social issues of the Depression.

Announce the artist, title, and date of the work of art

A confirmation check from outside sources is used to support the interpretation of the work. Present the following confirmation check to your students. Compare the experts' statements with the students' interpretations. Are they similar? Different? Ask your students to respond to the experts' statements.

CONFIRMATION CHECK:

Bishop states, "I want to express my sense of women's social limitations through gestures and clothes to suggest the possibility of social movement as well as physical movement"[1]

After the confirmation check, continue to Judgment

JUDGMENT

QUESTIONS

Is this an important painting? Why or why not?

Did the artist successfully achieve her intent? How?

What criteria would you use to determine the success of the work?

Does Bishop's realistic style contribute to the value of the work? Why or why not?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

This painting is important because it is about an issue that impacts many people.

The artist is painting about the social mobility of women. The artist successfully achieved her intent.

The work expresses the contrast between movement and being static.

The composition of the work and the techniques used to create it contribute to the success of the work.

The figures look real and the ability of the painting to communicate with the viewer contributes to its success.

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[1] Isabel Bishop: Portrait of an Artist. videotape. prod. John Bevmer and Patricia Depew. New York Film Company. Home Vision Video 1977

ART CRITICISM ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #1

1. Ask your students to research the work of several women artists in your community. Have them collect examples of these artists' work. Local galleries, art publications, newspaper articles and museums are good sources for photographs, postcards and posters.
2. Display as many examples as possible. Have each student select one artist to research. Using the processes of description, analysis, interpretation and judgment, ask them to write a report or create a visual display presenting their artist's work.
3. Display your students' completed works. Arrange for a class or school presentation of your students' research.

ACTIVITY #2

Contrast and compare the work of Isabel Bishop with works of the following artists:

- Rembrandt
- Rubens
- Reginal Marsh
- Henry Moore
- Willem de Kooning
- Jackson Pollack
- Hans Hoffman
- Käthe Kollwitz
- Faith Ringgold
- Raphael
- Jack Levine

Isabel Bishop

ART HISTORY

Isabel Bishop, 1992, Courtesy of Midtown Payson Galleries, 45 Fifth Avemue at 57th Street, New York, NY. Photographer: Nancy Schiff

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art history before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn:

- about the artist's life
- how life experiences (social, political, economical) influence the artist
- about the artist's media and technique
- about the artist's intent and the context of the work of art

In 1946, painter Isabel Bishop became the first woman officer of the National Institute of Arts and Letters when she was elected to serve as the Institute's Vice-President. Thirty-one years later, at the age of 85, Bishop received the esteemed Gold Medal for Painting from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

"I wasn't required to be isolated. I wanted to be an artist which is, after all, something you have to do by yourself."[13]

Isabel Bishop

FAMILY INFLUENCES

Isabel Bishop was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on March 3, 1902 to John Remsen Bishop, Ph.D., a Greek and Latin scholar and his wife, Anna Bartram Bishop, a suffragette. The Bishops had formerly established and operated their own preparatory school in Princeton, New Jersey, but with the birth of two sets of twins that came before Isabel, they moved to Cincinnati. Bishop was born thirteen years after the second set of twins. This move enabled Isabel's father to take a job teaching in the public schools where he eventually became a principal. At the age of one, the family moved to Detroit where her father took another teaching position at a high school in an effort to improve their finances. Her mother was in constant pursuit of a writing career, and spent most of her time and attention translating Dante's Inferno into English.[1]

The Bishops lived in a working class neighborhood which bordered one of the wealthier neighborhoods of the city. Often she would look out her window at the children playing. **"We were very isolated in Detroit and had almost no social life because, though we didn't have the money, we identified with the big houses on the next block. I wasn't supposed to play with the children on my block or be connected with them but I wanted to be....I envied the people on my block in my childhood."**[2]

Bishop felt that her one gift was her ability to draw. At the age of twelve, she enrolled in Saturday classes at the Wicker Art School where she drew from live models. Her instructor believed that everyone, regardless of their age, should learn to draw from live subjects. At the age of fifteen, Bishop graduated from high school. During this time, her father lost his job, but with the help of a wealthy relative, the family was able to maintain some degree of financial stability.

EDUCATION

In 1918 with her relative's financial support, Bishop moved to New York to study illustration at the School of Applied Design for Women. After two years of study, she read about modern art and enrolled at the Art Students League. The League offered Bishop a more stimulating atmosphere that incorporated a mixture of both realistic and abstract concepts on painting. Bishop studied with a variety of artists, each of whom influenced her artistic development. She briefly studied with Max Weber and, later, with Guy Pene du Bois before switching to study with Kenneth Hayes Miller. Miller believed in using contemporary subject matter in conjunction with classical Renaissance composition and theories. He also taught Bishop that if you have form, content will follow. This idea turned out to be a fallacy for Bishop. She studied with Miller for two years.[3]

WORKING TO BE AN ARTIST

In 1923, Bishop rented an apartment in Greenwich Village and resolved to be a dedicated painter. For three tumultuous years, she reevaluated her education and searched for her own form of personal expression. In addition, Bishop was coming to terms with the end of a love affair. At twenty-four, she attempted suicide on three different occasions. About these attempts, Bishop said, **"Once I jumped into the Hudson River in the middle of the night—but my body just wouldn't die. I began to swim. From then on...my belief in painting was like a religious**

conversion."[4] Bishop felt isolated and returned to the Art Students League and her peers for advanced classes with Miller, which gave her some structure to work within until 1929.

A NEW STUDIO

In 1926, she moved to another studio on 14th Street and Union Square. For nearly sixty years, Bishop painted in a studio overlooking this area. At first she painted still-lifes and self-portraits, but soon her interest shifted towards the working class people scurrying in the street below her window. "**... I think my being drawn to the 14th Street people and my sympathetic fascination with them came partly out of my isolation as a child and my fascination with my block, although I didn't realize it myself until a long time after.**"[5] This was the beginning of her historical documentation and involvement in gesture, movement and the people in Union Square.

In her studio, Bishop surrounded herself with two art reproductions and a quote. "**Here are two works I always keep with me. This is a Chinese mural and this is a very small Rubens painting which is in the Dulwich collection outside of London. This Rubens in juxtaposition with this Chinese fresco seems to me to answer the profoundest problems of form. They differ but they are not different. To me it is a matter of great spiritual nourishment and instruction.**"[6] The quote in her studio is taken from Henry James' short story entitled *The Middle Years*. "**We work in the dark. We do what we can—we give what we have. Our doubt is our passion, and our passion our task. The rest is the madness of art.**"[7]

In 1931, Bishop travelled to Europe with Reginald Marsh and Kenneth Hayes Miller and upon her return joined the Midtown Gallery. In 1933, she had her first one-woman exhibition at Midtown Gallery. In 1934, at 32 years of age, Bishop married neurologist Dr. Harold G. Wolff and lived in Riverdale in the Bronx. Daily, she travelled on the subway to her studio until she was 82. They had one son, Remsen H. Wolff, born in 1940.

BISHOP'S WORK

UNION SQUARE: Starting in 1927, and continuing until approximately 1960, Isabel Bishop became captivated by the people in and around Union Square. She said, "**Another thing I love about this square is the wall all around it. The level of the square is the top of the wall and you get to it by climbing up some steps. It's the only square in New York that's raised up. That happened because the subway station was enlarged underneath and had to be higher to accommodate two kinds of tracks. This is very fascinating to me because people lean against the wall.**"[8] Surrounded by a wrought iron fence, the square also contained stone benches, a fountain, drinking fountains, statuary of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, and a flagpole with an ornate base. A hub of commercial activity, the square was surrounded by department stores, buildings and offices, a repertory theater, a music academy and the burlesque, which employed hundreds of working class people who filled the streets. The area also attracted bargain shoppers, demonstrators for labor strikes, pro-Abolitionists, unemployment rallies, and peace, political and religious speeches. Union Square was teeming with humanity.[9]

"There is also the necessity for dealing with dead empty periods. You have to get a technique for it....[1] Always the museums have been of great importance. Even going to the museum without knowing what you want to look at—just soaking around is important. [2] Then, the other thing that has always been so nourishing to me is Union Square."[14]

Isabel Bishop

Fascinated by the activity, Bishop captured the motion and gestures of the people in Union Square, who worked in the city but lived in the Bronx or Brooklyn. The drawings in her sketchbook were of waitresses, salesclerks, stenographers, derelicts, mothers with children, shoppers and unemployed men of the Depression. She was an attentive observer and created sketches of their gestures as they leaned against a wall, ate lunch, met and chatted with each other, mended clothing or drank at the fountain. She invited some of these people to model in her studio. Eventually, her paintings included a series of people at a diner or lunch counter. In addition, her trademark became paintings of the working girl and her simple gestures—laughing, smiling, blowing smoke rings, examining her teeth—or a pair of girls together. Bishop valued these women as individualistic and tough and portrayed them with empathy. Some critics feel that the images of pairs of women are her best work.

PEOPLE AND THEIR COATS: At the same time (1929-1968), Bishop studied men and women putting on, taking off and carrying their coats. This simple gesture intrigued her. Again, Bishop focused on the simplicity of the everyday life of ordinary people.

WOMEN NUDES: From 1938 to 1970 Bishop drew traditional nudes of women. These nudes are more connected "to the Renaissance tradition by which the nude becomes the vessel of expression for the majesty of the human spirit...a tradition, whose exemplar is Rembrandt, by which the workaday nude, thick in the waist and heavy in the legs is the symbol of human endurance and its worthiness to survive."[10] These nudes are of individual woman. They are active—cutting their toe nails, putting on clothes or picking something off the floor—not sexual cliches. **"[The artist Willem] de Kooning said 'She paints the best...nudes.' I loved it. I thought that was great. I wouldn't have thought he was aware of my nudes, ... but apparently he was."**[11]

STRAP HANGERS AND THE SUBWAY: Another theme in Bishop's work is the subway (1948-1958). Bishop rode the subway from Riverdale to Union Square each day. She became fascinated with the thriving movement and began to make sketches of the people she saw there. This activity lead to a series of paintings which included the subway passengers and the underground structure. Bishop says **"...here people are always going or coming. This is not a place to stay; there is always movement."**[12]

WALKING OR PASSING PEOPLE: In the latter part of her life (1960-1980), Bishop created the Walking Series. More abstract than her past work, this series shows images of people walking through space or atmosphere. The walkers—university students going between classes—are parallel to the picture plane. There is a layer of figures across the foreground, which overlaps another set of figures who are overlapping buildings to represent space. The eyes of the walkers are often the same color as the ground, as they stare into space and walk past one another. A somewhat ambiguous figure/ground relationship occurs because of the similarity of the hues used in these paintings.

SELF-PORTRAITS: Bishop made a few self-portraits in the early years of her art career before she began to focus on Union Square and its people. In her later years, she had to give up her studio because of illness. Consequently, a studio was set up in her home and she painted the only thing she could—herself. These self-portraits were not like her earlier works, but were more like the Walking Series, characterized by

the same ambiguous figure/ground relationship. On February 19, 1988, Isabel Bishop died at the age of 85.

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES

Isabel Bishop was a perfectionist with a systematic method of working. First, she observed and sketched directly from life, usually choosing subjects from the masses of working class people in Union Square. In her studio, she refined and enlarged her sketches or drew from models to recreate and arrange a group composition. To analyze the brightness gradients (lights and shadows), she converted an image into an etching and reversed the composition into an aquatint. Next, Bishop made a photostat of the print and enlarged it to scale. Then she reversed the composition on to the canvas, and finally, painted the work.

"By underpainting in tempera on a gesso panel, then applying many oil glazes, she achieves the extraordinary mottled light that is a distinguishing feature of this work."[16] "Bishop floats them [color glazes] in front of, behind or within the shallow space where the walkers are disposed."[17] Her technique was elaborate and painstaking. The result of this technique was a meticulous buildup of painted surface layers which contained content, form, space and light. Her color palette was desaturated with muted warm earth hues such as white, black, yellow ochre and red-yellow. In Bishop's work, color is not as important as form and space which is defined by the reflected light off the surface.

Isabel Bishop's drawings have been compared to Rembrandt, Rubens and Henry Moore. She studied drawing in art school, focusing on Renaissance composition. Bishop practiced drawing eight hours a day, seven days a week for most of her life. Her magnificent drawings are in pencil, pen and wash, and etched prints. They suggest motion and emphasize the gestures of life. Bishop's works evolved from controlled renderings to nervous line drawings to full tone ink gouaches. In her later works, Bishop painted figures that appeared to be moving through airy, atmospheric conditions. Her intent was not only to report the image but to express it through line quality.

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[1] Helen Yglesias, Isabel Bishop (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1989) 10.
[2] Cindy Nemser, "Conversation with Isabel Bishop," The Feminist Art Journal Spring 1976: 15.
[3] Nemser 14-20.
[4] Peggy Moore, "Isabel Bishop: Half a Century of Painting the Flotsam of Union Square," People May 1975: 52.
[5] Nemser 15.
[6] Nemser 15.
[7] Yglesias 12.
[8] Nemser 14.
[9] Yglesias 12-16.
[10] John Canaday, "For Bishop, It's a Symbol of Endurance," New York Times 8 Apr 1967: 27:1.
[11] Nemser 20.
[12] "Poet in the Square," Time 16 May 1960: 81.
[13] Nemser 17.
[14] Nemser 18.
[15] Patricia Paul Newson, "Isabel Bishop," American Artist Sep 1985: 44.
[16] Elaine De Kooning, "Isabel Bishop," Art News May 1949: 48.
[17] Thomas B. Hess, "The Miracle of Union Square," New York Magazine 19 May 1975: 89.

"All art is metaphor.... Technique all by itself won't take you where you want to go. There has to be the struggle of something deeper. It isn't a question of how you rendered something. It's much deeper than that."[13]

Isabel Bishop

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Isabel Bishop

IMAGE: Detail from On the Street *(Fourteenth Street), 1932*
MEDIUM: Oil on canvas
LOCATION: Private collection
SIZE: 14 1/2" X 16"

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for aesthetics before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn To:

- examine different theories of art
- discuss various criteria for valuing art
- analyze *On the Street* from a variety of philosophical viewpoints
- develop logical arguments based on sound reasoning

AESTHETIC THEORIES:

The following theories present different viewpoints from which we can consider works of art. They are summarized in the boxes below in language appropriate for your students. Introduce and/or review the theories if necessary.

IMITATIONALISM
Literal Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the realistic presentation of subject matter. A work is successful if it looks like and reminds us of what we see in the real world.

FORMALISM
Visual Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the effective organization of the elements of art through the arrangement of visual principles.

EXPRESSIONISM
Emotional Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the vivid communication of moods, feelings and ideas to the viewer.

INSTRUMENTALISM
Functional Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is that it serves a function that is practical or furthers moral, religious, social or political points of view.

INSTITUTIONALISM
Contextual Classification

The most important thing about a work of art is the context in which it exists and in which it is validated by the artworld.

Theories:

Imitationalism

Formalism

Expressionism

Instrumentalism

Institutionalism

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AESTHETIC QUESTIONS:

Organize your students for a discussion. Work with your entire class or divide students into groups. Discuss one or more of the following aesthetic questions. In addition to a discussion, you may choose to ask students to write their answers to the questions and present them to the class.

1. What is your response to Bishop's work on an emotional level? Is art supposed to provoke an emotional response from the viewer? Why or why not?

2. Using the five theories of art presented, each as a different point of view for valuing art, which theory or theories support Bishop's painting *On the Street*? How and why?

3. In 1955, Selden Rodman organized a controversial exhibit entitled, *Eye of Man*. The images selected for the exhibit included works of art by two groups of artists that held opposing viewpoints. The debate centered on the question *what is most important about a work of art, its form or function?* One group of artists whose works emphasized *form* included Hans Hoffman, Willem de Kooning and Larry Rivers. The second group of artists were primarily concerned with the *function* of their work. This group included works by Isabel Bishop, Ben Shahn, Charles Sheeler and Jack Levine. What is form? What is function? What do you think is the most important quality of a work of art, its form or function? Are both needed for the viewer to understand the work? Is it important that a work of art is understood by the viewer? Explain your answers.

Isabel Bishop

FOR THE TEACHER
ART PRODUCTION GUIDE

"More Than One is Always a Crowd"

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art production before beginning this component of the lesson.

TEACHER PREPARATION:

1. Read the "Art Production Guide" and "Student Planning Guide" for Isabel Bishop.
2. Duplicate the "Student Planning Guide" and the "Thumbnail Sketches Worksheet".
3. Prepare the necessary art materials and prepare to demonstrate any studio techniques as needed. Practice with the materials before you begin.

***SUGGESTED MATERIALS**: pencils, pastels, charcoal, acrylic or tempera paints, paper or illustration board, newsprint.*

4. Plan your schedule to allow time for your students to research, investigate, explore, create, reflect and assess their work.
5. The criteria for the following art production activity are based on the work of Isabel Bishop. The list below is a summary of the characteristics of her work. Use this list as a reference for review.

CHARACTERISTICS OF BISHOP'S WORK:

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- used lines, brightness gradients and shapes to create form
- used appropriate size relationships and overlap to create the appearance of depth
- used correct body proportions

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM:

- expressed gestures, action and movement with line
- expressed atmospheric qualities of the environment
- expressed the spontaneity of her subjects

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES :

- used drawing and oil painting techniques
- used a variety of printmaking techniques

ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY:

Ask your students to draw or paint a group/crowd of at least ten figures in a humorous situation or environment.

CRITERIA FOR THE ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY:

Have your students incorporate the following criteria in their work. These criteria will provide the structure upon which you can base your assessment of their learning.

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- use line, brightness gradients and shapes to create the appearance of form
- use correct body proportions
- use appropriate size relationships and overlap to create the appearance of depth

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM:

- express the gestures, action and movement of the figures
- create a humorous situation and environment for your figures

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- paint or draw with the media of your choice
- demonstrate skillful use of media

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ART PRODUCTION WITH THE CLASS:

PREPARATION:

1. Review the characteristics of Bishop's work.
2. Distribute and introduce the Student Planning Guide. Read it with your students and check for their understanding.
3. Introduce the art production activity and criteria.
4. Introduce or review vocabulary as needed.

PRACTICE:

1. Introduce or review gesture drawing. Emphasize the importance of gestures, action and movement and the way in which such expressions contribute to the mood or feeling of a work of art. Have your students devote two class sessions to gesture drawing.
2. Introduce or review the basic rules for drawing the figure using accurate body proportions. Have your students practice drawing figures with accurate body proportions.
3. Introduce or review the depth cues of overlap, size and brightness gradients and how they are used to create form. Have students practice adding gradients to their figure drawings using a light source.

Discuss the rationale for the assigned practice sessions with your students:

- Drawing the human figure requires practice and is essential to the development of drawing skills. The human figure offers unlimited possibilities as subject matter.
- Learning to draw requires persistence.
- Drawing develops the ability to see accurately and improves hand/eye coordination.
- Practice sessions are intended to support continual improvement.

If you are not familiar with gestures or contour drawing, an excellent resource is The Natural Way To Draw by Nicholas Nicholides.

PRESENTATION:

1. Discuss possible ideas for subject matter. Ask your students to list a variety of possible locations or events where groups of people gather. For example sporting events, shopping malls, dances, movie theaters, concerts or the school cafeteria.
2. Discuss a variety of humorous situations that may be possible ideas for subject matter. Some ideas could include a crowd of people in a phone booth, car or elevator.

VOCABULARY:

Crowd—
a large number of persons, especially when collected into a somewhat compact space without order

Gesture—
a movement usually of the body or limbs that symbolizes or emphasizes an idea, sentiment or attitude

Overlap—
the process of placing one shape over another shape and partially blocking it from view

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PRODUCTION:

1. Have your students begin working with the Student Planning Guide sections I through V.
2. Introduce and demonstrate media or techniques as needed.
3. Have your students complete the art production activity.

ASSESSMENT:

1. The Student Planning Guide asks your students to assess their own learning. After they have completed their written evaluations, gather your class for a group discussion. Ask your students to review the criteria and discuss their own work in relation to those criteria. Encourage your students to use their written comments to support their remarks.
2. Use information from your students' written assessments and group discussion to assist you in your final assessment. Your students work and their planning guides will provide useful information for portfolio assessment.
3. Exhibit your students' artwork.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS FOR THIS UNIT:

1. Ask your students to observe an everyday activity and draw it—a person talking on the telephone, eating pizza, slouched on the couch, reading a newspaper, combing their hair, brushing their teeth or putting on their jacket.
2. Ask your students to draw a coat hanging on a hook or a formal dress on a hanger. Select a student to model a hat, a glove or a uniform (nurse, marching band, football player).
3. Ask your students to draw motion by using the technique of "freeze frame"—multiples of a figure in a sequence of an action or movement—walking, running, skiing, jumping or another active gesture (a la Duchamp's "Nude Descending a Staircase").

Name Date

Isabel Bishop

STUDENT PLANNING GUIDE

"More Than One is Always a Crowd"

This worksheet is designed to help you develop an idea for your art production. These exercises will help organize your thoughts to create a powerful statement and composition.

Bishop's artistic strength was in observing and expressing the gesture quality of the human figure with line. She continually refined her skills through diligent practice.

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I. ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Your challenge is to draw or paint a crowd of at least ten figures in a humorous situation or environment. Create an appropriate environment for your figures.

CRITERIA FOR ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Incorporate the following criteria into your drawing or painting.

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- use line, brightness gradients and shape to create the appearance of form
- use correct body proportions
- use appropriate size relationships and overlap to create the appearance of depth

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM:

- express the gestures, actions and movements of the figures
- create a humorous situation and environment for your figures

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- paint or draw with the media of your choice
- demonstrate skillful use of media

II. RESEARCH/HOMEWORK/ART JOURNAL

1. Use the resources in your local community for inspiration. To practice drawing the figure outside of school, go to the shopping mall, to sports events or other public places where there are people to observe and draw. Draw a series of gesture drawings in your art journal that capture their movements. Notice how people appear to overlap one another in a crowd. Record the list of places you have gone to sketch. Date and keep your sketches.
2. Make a list of five or more humorous situations you might incorporate in your work.

3. Make a list of five or more ideas you might use for your environment.

III. BRAINSTORMING/GETTING AN IDEA

Choose a theme for your drawing. Make a list of three possible ideas for your work.

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IV. SELECTION

Select your best idea. Choose an environment to place your figures and describe it below.

V. DESIGN/PREPARE SKETCHES

Write a statement of your intent. Answer the following questions. Why did you select this idea for your drawing or painting? What do you hope to express through your work?

Draw a series of thumbnail sketches of your idea using the worksheet.

VI. MATERIALS

Discuss your sketches and the materials you will need to complete your drawing or painting with your teacher. List the materials you will need below.

VII. PRODUCTION

(Fill out during the production of your work of art.) Complete your drawing or painting with the materials you have selected. Analyze any problems you experienced while working and note them below. If you encountered any mistakes, how did you incorporate them into your work?

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VIII. SELF-ASSESSMENT

(Fill out after the completion of your assignment.) The assessment of your work is based on the criteria listed in Section I. Review the criteria before you assess your work.

How effectively does your work meet the criteria?

In your own words, state what it is you have learned by doing this activity.

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Isabel Bishop

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*These books and articles have a wealth of information and are easily accessible to supplement your teaching unit.

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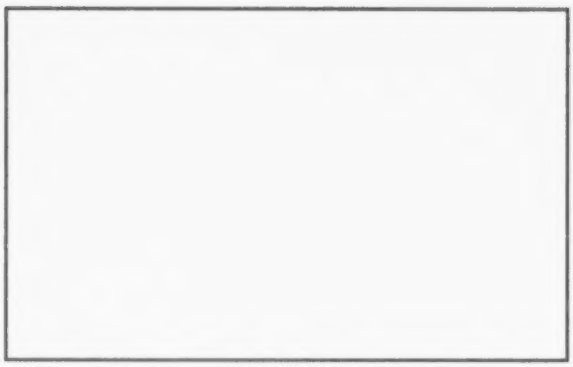
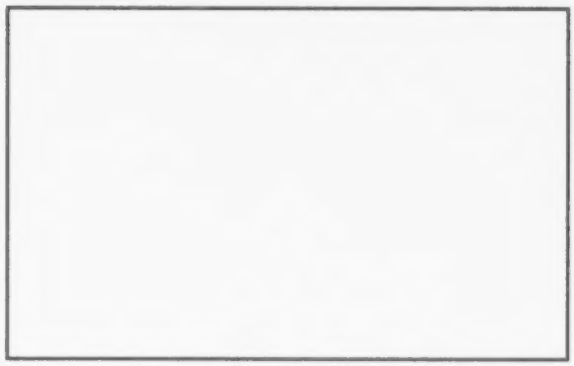
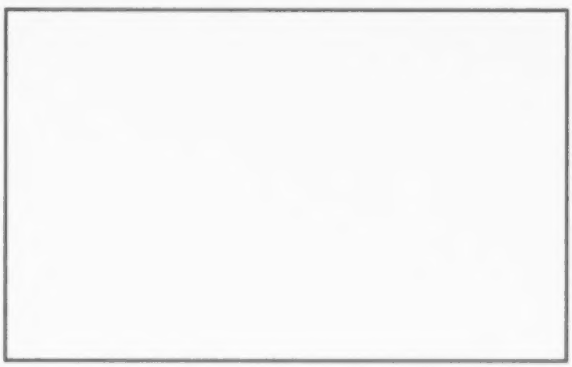
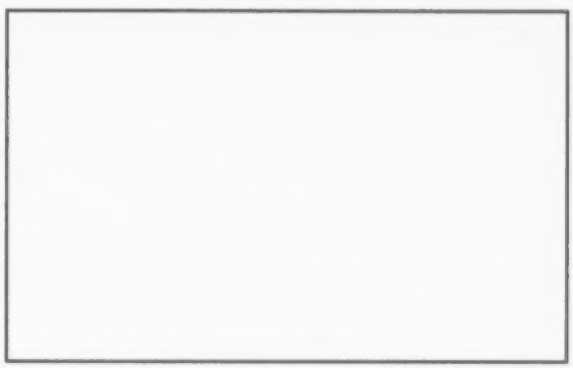
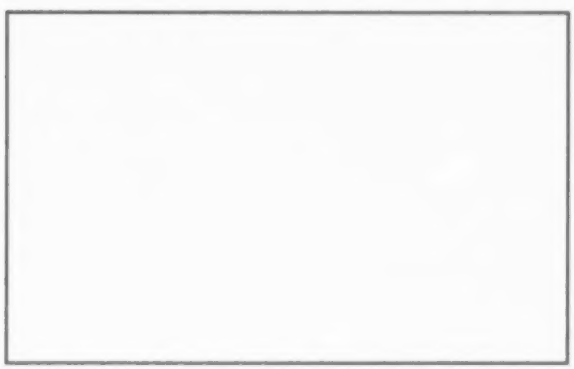
Student Worksheet

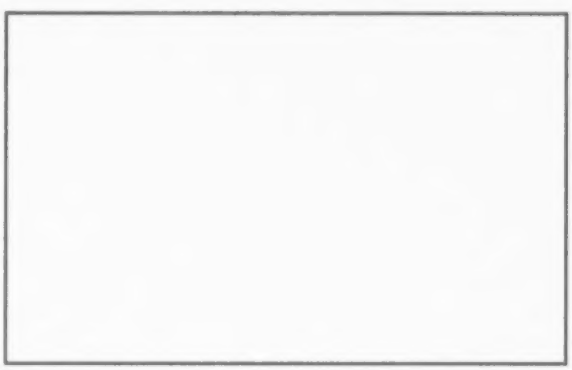


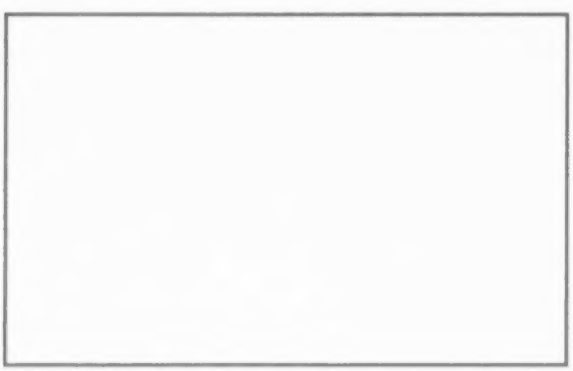


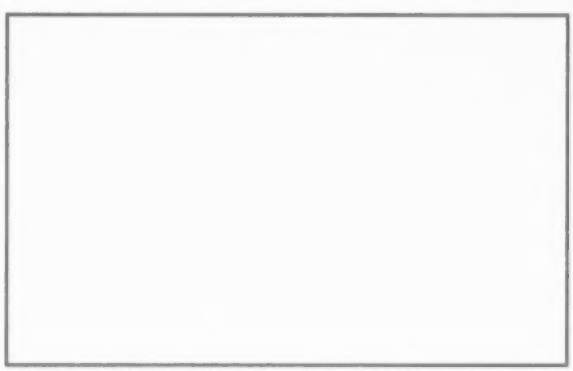












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Jenny Holzer

Jenny Holzer

IMAGE: Detail from Protect Me From What I Want
Selection from the Survival Series 1985-86
MEDIUM: Spectracolor Board, Installation
LOCATION: Las Vegas, Nevada, 1986

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art criticism before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn To:

- describe and analyze the elements of art in works of art
- interpret the meaning of works of art
- make informed judgments about works of art based on various criteria
- recognize and interpret the artist's intent

Organize your class for a discussion about the installation Protect Me From What I Want by Jenny Holzer. Display the art reproduction in a prominent place for viewing. Use the following questions to guide your students in an in-depth discussion. The possible responses that follow each group of questions are included to help support the discussion.

DESCRIPTION:

QUESTIONS

Let's begin our discussion by listing everything we see in the work of art.

How would you describe what you see?

How many letters and words are there?

What do the letters say?

What materials and techniques were used to create the work?

What is the environment surrounding the work?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

This is an LED (light-emitting-diode) installation on a large sign in the city.

The sign has black block letters on white rectangular background.

There are twenty-two letters which are all written in capitals.

The letters spell PROTECT ME FROM WHAT I WANT

The text is displayed on a lighted sign where there would normally be an advertisement for a product.

The message is unsigned and therefore the author is anonymous.

The environment is a street in Las Vegas at Caesar's Palace casino. Signs from other restaurants and places of business are visible.

The background is very dark because it is night.

ANALYSIS:

QUESTIONS

What values are used in the work?

Did the artist use a limited or wide range of values to create the brightness?

Does the image have an illusion of flat or deep space?

Are the shapes simple or complex?

How are the letters similar to one another?

How would you describe the texture of the work?

How is the contrast created?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

The letters are black on a white background.

The letters contrast with the background.

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There are no gradations of brightness involved, therefore there is no apparent depth or illusion of space.

The letters are simple in shape and some, such as O's, R's and W's, are repeated throughout the words.

All of the letters are the same size, typeface, and value; they differ only in that they are different letters.

The letters have simple apparent texture because they are made up of rows of lights that repeat over and over.

Contrast is created by the dramatic difference between the black letters and white background.

INTERPRETATION:

QUESTIONS

What does the message "Protect Me From What I Want" mean?

Does the phrase seem like a public service message? Why or why not?

Does it make you stop and reflect about your personal desires? If so, in what way? Why do you think the artist used an LED board, instead of paint and canvas, as her medium?

Why do you think she used black and white, instead of color, to convey her message? What was her intent?

How does the sign relate to the environment surrounding it?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

PROTECT ME FROM WHAT I WANT is a message that asks us to examine our desires. It suggests that we often want things that are harmful or unhealthy.

It seems like a public service message because it is so brief and direct. Yet, it says something that everyone can think about.

PROTECT ME FROM WHAT I WANT makes you think about what you are doing or what you are about to do.

It makes you stop and question--should I really have plastic surgery, clothes, money, cars, jewelry, children, power, alcohol or a cigarette?

The LED sign insured that more people would be able to see the art and read the message than if the message were displayed somewhere indoors, such as in a gallery.

Because our society is very much influenced by advertising and commercials, the artist used this medium to get her message to everyone.

The black letters are stark and direct. Their only intent is to communicate the message.

The black and white contrast with the color in the surroundings and increases the sign's power to attract attention.

Announce the artist, title and date of the work of art

A confirmation check from outside sources is used to support the interpretation of the work. Present the following confirmation check to your students. Compare the experts' statements with your students' interpretations. Are they similar? Different? Ask your students to respond to the experts' statements.

CONFIRMATION CHECK:

This LED sign has been shown in the cities of New York, Las Vegas and San Francisco. The message is part of a series of messages presented by the artist on the topic titled "Survival". The visual artist's intent is to have this installation "function outside the world of 'art'...to sell an idea or product to a passive public...wake up and think for yourself".[1] Her intent is also accomplished in marketing of commercial items, such as posters, T-shirts, tractor hats, stickers, and metal plaques. In addition she uses the media of advertising such as, television commercial spots that are 2-30 seconds long, billboards, large LED (light-emitting diode) signs and benches placed in public areas such as airports, banks and parks. "For Holzer, this has meant confronting and ultimately exploiting the authoritarian voice that comes to us in the simple but convincing message we call 'advertising'. Holzer's messages do not ask us to buy; they ask us to think about how we feel about the world we live in."[2]

"The texts went up on signs in the University of Nevada sports center, which also serves as a big entertainment complex; in a stadium; two shopping centers; and on the publicity board outside Caesar's Palace. They seemed unusual there in particular because they were the only thing that wasn't Caesar's information on the sign. Everything else was about the coming entertainers or various gambling specials....The sentences also rolled on signs in the Las Vegas airport baggage handling area; they had audience effects which ran from giggling to astonishment." [3]

After the confirmation check, continue to Judgment

JUDGMENT:

QUESTIONS

What are the merits of this work?

Does it effectively communicate the artist's intent?

What criteria are you using to support your opinion?

In your opinion, is this an important piece of art? Why or why not?

Does the medium used by the artist contribute to the value of the work? Explain your answer.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

The ideas of the artist are important. She is questioning consumerism.

The artist makes us look carefully at our lives and society.

The artist is trying to make art for everyone, not just a few special people.

The artist's intent was to communicate her message which is very clear and spoken in simple language anyone can understand.

The artist used modern materials in a very creative way.

The work of Jenny Holzer presents the viewer with words not images. Therefore, she challenges the viewer to create their own imagery based on their individual experiences.

Michael Auping. Jenny Holzer. (New York: Universe, 1992) 34.
Auping 11.
Bruce Ferguson. "Wordsmith: An Interview with Jenny Holzer." Jenny Holzer: Signs. Catalogue for exhibition at the Des Moines Art Center. (Des Moines, Iowa: 1986) 27.

ART CRITICISM ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #1

1. Read the two reviews of Holzer's work on the pages that follow. Duplicate the reviews for your students to read.
2. Divide your class into two or more groups to prepare for a debate over the two opposing viewpoints presented in the articles. Invite another class in to hear the debate.

ACTIVITY #2

Ask students to contrast and compare the work of Jenny Holzer with the works of the following artists:

- Marcel Duchamp
- Jackson Pollock
- Andy Warhol
- Keith Haring
- Barbara Kruger
- Maya Lin
- Faith Ringgold
- Käthe Kollwitz

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Holzer Makes the Guggenheim a Museum of Many Messages

New York Times • Page C19 • December 13, 1989

by Roberta Smith

With the exhibition of Jenny Holzer's work that opened yesterday at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the museum continues to kick up its heels, tossing off a severe case of the dulls that plagued it for the last several years as far as contemporary art was concerned. This is a fresh eye-opening exhibition that brings to a broader public the work of the artist who has been selected to represent the United States at next summer's Venice Biennale.

The 39-year-old Ms. Holzer is a member of a post-Conceptual generation of artists of the 80's that has tended to fuse ideas and materials with great sophistication and shrewdness. She has become known as a poetically inclined social critic who is exceptionally deft at rechanneling various tools of public address to personal and artistic purposes. Her unsettling aphorisms and condensed narratives, which have series titles like "Truisms," "Inflammatory Essays" and "Laments," adapt voices that are variously flip or ominous. "Protect me from what I want" is one of her better-known phrases, but so is "Die fast and quiet when they interrogate you or live so long that they are ashamed to hurt you anymore."

The artist has consistently shunned high-art forms. In the beginning of her career, posters, bronze plaques, T-shirts and billboards were her standard means of communication. Since the mid-80's, her words have most often been carved into the seats of sleek stone benches that suggest tombstones, or they have been sent out along electronic moving-message signs like the Motogram that flashes the news on the tower in Times Square. These formats, used in combination as they are at the Guggenheim, are particularly effective, pitting the primordial against the high-tech, shifting restlessly between past and future, the enduring and the ephemeral.

Ms. Holzer has been given the run of the Guggenheim, or more precisely half of it, and she has come up with a trio of installations that nearly strips the building of art yet fills it in her own way. She has focused her activities almost entirely on the Guggenheim's great tiered atrium, leaving the walls of its coiled ramp bare. The museum has never looked, nor felt, quite like this.

In effect, the building has been turned into a vast darkened cave with glowing embers at its center: a 535-foot-long moving message that snakes its way around the first three tiers of the museum's coil, offering a retrospective of Ms. Holzer's writing as it goes.

This mixing of Ms. Holzer's different texts emphasizes the range of her writing and the different voices she has called into service. She can offer wise words to live by, put you in touch with your most private memories or make you fear for the future of the planet.

In addition to the meaning of her words, there is the perceptual power and wonderful spatial disorientation of their upward-circling stream, which are heightened by shifts in color, typeface, speed and, upon occasion, direction. Standing on the ramp with the words moving above and below, the viewer feels like a small blip in some giant video game. As one moves down the ramp, the words circle at about the same pace - an effect that proposes each viewer as the center of a slowly revolving universe.

While the moving message piece is the exhibition's main event, it is balanced by two installations using carved benches that provide a needed sense of stillness. On the ground floor of the atrium is a large circle formed by 17 red granite benches that suggests an ancient campfire or a church meeting. In the two-story gallery at the beginning of the ramp's first tier, 27 white granite benches are placed in closely regimented formation like markers in a crowded cemetery. Carved with phrases that also appear in the moving-message sign, these bench works, as they might be called, point to the ancient communal rituals of storytelling and mourning that inspire much of Ms. Holzer's work.

Like the show of Mario Merz's installation art before it, this exhibition suggest that the Guggenheims new director Thomas Krens, is determined to deal head on with the museum's architectural limitations by simply turning talented artists loose within it. This is in some ways a liberating approach. It can be inspiring to see an artist lay hands on a familiar space and make it new, and Ms. Holzer has risen to the challenge.

But it also shows the Guggenheim behaving more like an art gallery or an alternative space than a museum that takes its curatorial responsibilities seriously. In a town that is long on the former but short on the latter, this raises some questions. Organized by Diane Waldman, the museum's deputy director, and accompanied by a brief catalogue that does little more than document the artist's previous efforts, this exhibition bears a few signs of curatorial intervention. It is entirely too much Ms. Holzer's show. Good as it is to watch Ms. Holzer rethink a space as eccentric as the Guggenheim's, it might also have been appropriate to see a curator actively rethink what the artist has achieved thus far.

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A Sampler of Witless Truisms

Time Magazine • July 30, 1990

by Robert Hughes

America's Jenny Holzer Showers Received Ideas on the Biennale

Jenny Holzer is the first woman artist to fill the U.S. pavilion at the Venice Biennale. For America to represent itself with a woman at the world's oldest festival of new art was a long-overdue gesture. But alas, the best thing to be said about it is that Holzer is a woman. Considered as art, the installation by this 39-year-old conceptual artist seems lavish but mediocre, especially when divorced from the feverish context of the Biennale's opening.

For a few days in late May, the whole international art set converges on Venice, jams Harry's Bar and the Corte Sconta, and migrates from one lavish party to the next. Briefly the choruses of "interesting" drown out the arpeggios of the singing gondoliers. This preserves the idea that the Biennale has some kind of following outside the art world itself--an illusion. For everyone then departs, leaving the festival in a state of utter torpor with three months to run.

On a sunny Sunday morning in July, near the height of the Venetian tourist season, the public gardens are empty. Where is the audience for the new? The national pavilions, that whimsical collage of defunct official styles, are as deserted as the dream piazza in a De Chirico, populated only by young *guardiani* doing their nails in the humid silence. It reminds you of the old nursery rhyme:

> Miss Smarty gave a party:
> Nobody came.
> Her brother gave another--
> Just the same.

This gap--more like a canyon--between the Art World and the Real World seems particularly sad in Holzer's case, since the one thing she evidently yearns to do is make contact with a wide public by showering it with improving mottos, printed on posters, zapping from light-emitting diode boxes, and even carved in stone: EATING TOO MUCH IS CRIMINAL, for instance, or ABUSE OF POWER COMES AS NO SURPRISE. In the late '70's, after graduating from the Rhode Island School of Design, Holzer was smitten by an insight. To subvert the slow and, natch, "élitist" way in which art tends to find an audience, she started writing short slogans and leaving them in public places for people to read. "If you want to reach a general audience," she proclaimed, "it's not art issues that are going to compel them to stop on their way to lunch, it has to be life issues."

Too true, although it is hard to know how far Holzer's work succeeds in this agenda, there being no restaurant behind the U.S. pavilion. But short of building one, American cultural officialdom could not have been more obliging. The funding bodies, which included the National Endowment for the Arts, the U.S. Information Agency and the Rockefeller Foundation, paid to have her thoughts chiseled on benches and, in four languages (not always perfectly translated), on the marble plaques with which the pavilion floor is newly paved. Electronic mavens set them moving across giant LED screens on the walls. Not since Cecil B. DeMille caused lightning to peck the Ten Commandments onto Charlton Heston's tablets had American culture spend so much on lettering. All this to tell the world it should not overeat. *Tipicamente americano*, one might think.

But not more so than the content of Holzer's thoughts. Starting with Goethe, Pascal and Chamfort, the list of aphorists to whom she is inferior would be exceedingly long, but she does try. Not for nothing does she call he utterances "truisms." Their lack of wit is almost disarming. They have an earnest hortatory confidence that makes other kinds of word art--Ben Vautier's in France in the '60's, for instance--look semidetached. Holzer's trouble is that although she wants to use language alone as the stuff of visual art--a dubious enterprise anyway--she has no language. She just rambles, and her linguistic poverty strikes people as "radical," as though it were the result of some exacting distillation. But it is thin and complacent, started up with costly materials for the audience of consumers whose pretensions it affects to despise. Its bathos (LACK OF CHARISMA CAN BE FATAL) might have issued from the warm heart of some Midwestern creative-writing course. Her phrasing (IDEALS ARE REPLACED BY CONVENTIONAL GOALS AT A CERTAIN AGE) is like a Hallmark card rewritten in academe. Holzer may sometimes remind you of Seneca (EXPIRING FOR LOVE IS BEAUTIFUL BUT STUPID) and sometimes of Bakunin (PRIVATE PROPERTY CREATED CRIME). But down deep she is a homebody.

Thus her Dictionary of Received Ideas seems to have tapped a main vein. Holzer is the modern version--rewired, subsidized, eagerly collected, but still recognizable--of those American maidens who, a century ago, passed their hours stitching improving texts on samplers: THOU GOD SEEST ME, ABC, XYZ. The main differences are that instead of using biblical texts, Holzer writes her own, and that instead of using needle and thread, she inscribes them in LEDs and marble. Once Old Nick made work for idle hands; today the art market does.

It may seem odd that Holzer was chosen for the Biennale over artists like Susan Rothenberg or Elizabeth Murray. But one should remember that America is touchy about its lack of literacy; someone must have wanted to stress that American artists can write. Besides, élitism is an extremely dirty word in art circles these days, and whatever else she may be, Holzer is no élitist. Her work is so faultlessly, limpidly pedestrian as to make no demands of any sort on the viewer, beyond the slight eyestrain induced by the LEDs.

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ART HISTORY

Jenny Holzer

Jenny Holzer, Courtesy of Barbara Gladstone Gallery, NY. Photographer: Michaela Zeidler

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art history before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn:

- about the artist's life
- how life experiences (social, political, economical) influence the artist
- about the artist's media and technique
- about the artist's intent and the context of the work of art

In 1991, conceptual artist Jenny Holzer, then 41 years old, showed her life work as the representative of the United States in the 44th Venice Biennale. She was the first woman, as well as the youngest person, to be selected to represent the U.S. in this esteemed international competition. An additional accolade: Her pavilion was awarded first place.

FAMILY INFLUENCES

Jenny Holzer was born on July 29, 1950 in Gallipolis, Ohio. She was the oldest of Richard and Virginia Holzer's three children. Holzer's mother taught riding in college before marrying; her father owned a Ford dealership.

As a child, Holzer designed large, elaborate drawings on rolls of shelf paper. **"I wanted to pack everything into one drawing. The only drawings I remember are the really long ones that go on and on."**[1] When she was around eight years old, Holzer stopped drawing, but the idea of being an artist endured.

During Holzer's teenage years, her family moved to Lancaster, Ohio, where she attended high school. She completed her high school education at Pine Crest Preparatory School, a private school in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

EDUCATION

For her undergraduate education, Holzer attended several universities. From 1968 to 1970, she majored in liberal arts at Duke University before transferring to the University of Chicago. After a year in Chicago, she moved to Ohio University in Athens where, in 1973, she received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting and printmaking. After graduation, she visited New York. In the summer of 1974, Holzer attended classes at Rhode Island School of Design where she met artist Mike Glier, whom she eventually married in 1983. Five years later their daughter, Lili, was born.

In 1975 Holzer began her graduate work at the Rhode Island School of Design, where she became a graduate assistant and, in 1977, received her Master of Fine Arts degree in painting.

INFLUENCES AND DISCOVERIES

While in graduate school, Holzer was influenced by contemporary, abstract artists Mark Rothko and Morris Louis. She did a number of abstract paintings, but was not satisfied with them. Holzer also attempted a few public art projects. In one project, she left a painting on the beach for passersby to find and then observed their reactions. In another project, she painted everything in her studio—windows, walls, fixtures and furniture—a wash of thalo blue.

During the same period, Holzer collected professional illustrations and diagrams, mainly from the fields of medicine, science and religion because she felt those used in these fields were, visually, the most direct. After awhile, Holzer found the captions more interesting than the images themselves. **"The captions, in a clean, pure way, told you everything. This was the beginning—or one of the beginnings—of what got me to the pure writing."**[2]

In January of 1977, while she was still in graduate school, Holzer went to New York to take part in the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program. Each week, she and other students met with a different visiting artist. In addition, the group was assigned extensive reading lists of

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books devoted to Western and Eastern thought. Overwhelmed by the readings, Holzer began to distill these philosophical concerns into condensed one-line statements which she called *Truisms*.

Holzer also began to develop socially explicit art intended for an urban environment, but was searching for an appropriate means of expression. One day she noticed someone had plastered Times Square with posters warning people that they would contract leprosy and tuberculosis if they crossed an imaginary line. Those who read the posters stopped dead in their tracks. The posters were very effective. Holzer realized that posters would be an exceptional format for her own work.

HOLZER'S TRUISMS, ESSAYS AND LIVING SERIES

TRUISMS (1977-1979): Using an old typewriter, Holzer created approximately fifty *Truisms*. These are original one line cliches that sound like truths. When different Truisms are presented together, they simultaneously express many strong, often conflicting, opinions of society. They make "no value judgment except what the viewer or reader brings to them."[3] Holzer typed the Truisms on a single sheet of paper using all capital letters and a sans-serif typeface. She organized them alphabetically, placing each one on a separate line to stress their individual importance.[4] She printed the posters and used wheat-paste to apply them to surfaces throughout the SoHo section of Manhattan. The narrator's voice in Truisms is Everyman—anonymous, impersonal and objective—with many different viewpoints. A few examples of Truisms include:

A LOT OF PROFESSIONALS ARE CRACKPOTS
A MAN CAN'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A MOTHER
A STRONG SENSE OF DUTY IMPRISONS YOU
ABUSE OF POWER COMES AS NO SURPRISE
ACTION CAUSES MORE TROUBLE THAN THOUGHT
CALM IS MORE CONDUCIVE TO CREATIVITY THAN IS ANXIETY

In the streets, people wrote their responses directly on the posters or Holzer eavesdropped on conversations to receive feedback on her work. Eventually, Holzer put her Truisms on T-shirts, caps and billboards; on the backs of cash register receipts; in small books; and later, on electronic signs. Ultimately, she exhibited in the store-front windows of two alternative art galleries, Franklin Furnace (1978) and Fashion Moda (1979), where she placed large Photostats of the text accompanied by audio tape narrations of the same material. By the time that Holzer decided to stop writing Truisms, there were 250 of them in the series.[5]

INFLAMMATORY ESSAYS (1979-1982): In 1979, Holzer began writing a series of weekly *Inflammatory Essays*. The essays were inspired by manifestos written by Goldman, Hitler, Lenin, Mao and Trotsky, as well as, John Birch literature and the Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx. The content, tone and format of the essays were patterned after the type of handbills produced by underground presses. A single essay was one-hundred words long and typeset on twenty lines using a bold, sans-serif typeface and all capital letters. Each essay was printed with black ink on the same size paper. Only the color of the paper varied from week to week.

"Language has been the core because the writing holds most of the subject matter. I think the visual elements have been successful in conveying emotion and information in recent installations, but I wouldn't want to rely solely on the visuals. I hope that the text and the visuals are inseparable now. It should not be either/or."[18]

Jenny Holzer

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In Holzer's series of essays, the narrator's voice is anonymous, angry, aggressive or raves about controversial topics. The following is an excerpt from The Inflammatory Essays:

> A CRUEL BUT ANCIENT LAW DEMANDS AN EYE FOR AN EYE. MURDER MUST BE ANSWERED BY EXECUTION. ONLY GOD HAS THE RIGHT TO TAKE A LIFE AND WHEN SOMEONE BREAKS THIS LAW HE WILL BE PUNISHED. JUSTICE MUST COME SWIFTLY. IT DOESN'T HELP ANYONE TO STALL. THE VICTIM'S FAMILY CRIES OUT FOR SATISFACTION. THE COMMUNITY BEGS FOR PROTECTION AND THE DEPARTED CRAVES VENGEANCE SO HE CAN REST. THE KILLER KNEW IN ADVANCE THERE WAS NO EXCUSE FOR HIS ACT. TRULY HE HAS TAKEN HIS OWN LIFE. HE, NOT SOCIETY, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS FATE. HE ALONE STANDS GUILTY AND DAMNED.

Because of the medium used to create them, both the Truisms and The Inflammatory Essays were expected to be temporary. Anyone could easily write on the paper, tear it down or crumple it. Elements such as wind, rain and sun could damage the paper as well. These posters weren't necessarily created to last; they were created to elicit reactions from people on the streets. Holzer designed her posters for visual impact. The use of bold, sans-serif type helped Holzer's posters to stand out among the many other posters on the street and made them easily recognizable, even from a distance. With The Inflammatory Essays, the highly saturated hue of the paper created great walls of color that drew the attention of passersby.

Holzer has spoken about her choices of topics for her writing: "My main concern is whether the text is about a subject that is likely to mean something to people. I want to write about what needs attention, for instance, unnecessary death. I write on what obsesses people: justice, love, war, money and sex. Once I think my subject is on target, I try to write as well as possible, and as appropriately as I can....I do a number of drafts....it's a good sign when writing the text bothers me."[6]

THE LIVING SERIES (1980-1982): In *The Living Series*, Holzer presented her writings in a more permanent format—on bronze plaques or painted signs—using a serif typeface. Because she had to ask for official permission to hang the plaques, fewer sites were available. For text, she "often rewrote news items and described mundane activities".[7] Holzer wanted to indicate how daily events are linked with social and political ideas. In The Living Series, the narrator's voice is more institutional, authoritative, official, bland and upper class. Some excerpts from the Living Series include:

> IT TAKES AWHILE BEFORE YOU CAN STEP OVER INERT BODIES AND GO AHEAD WITH WHAT YOU WERE WANTING TO DO

> WHEN YOU'VE BEEN SOMEWHERE FOR AWHILE, YOU ACQUIRE THE ABILITY TO BE PRACTICALLY INVISIBLE. THIS LETS YOU OPERATE WITH A MINIMUM OF INTERFERENCE.

> MORE THAN ONCE I'VE WAKENED WITH TEARS RUNNING DOWN MY CHEEKS. I HAVE HAD TO THINK WHETHER I WAS CRYING OR WHETHER IT WAS INVOLUNTARY LIKE DROOLING.

> YOU HAVE TO MAKE THOUSANDS OF PRECISE AND RAPID MOVEMENTS TO PREPARE A MEAL. CHOPPING, STIRRING AND TURNING PREDOMINATE. AFTERWARDS, YOU STACK AND MAKE CIRCULAR CLEANING AND RINSING MOTION. SOME PEOPLE NEVER COOK BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOTHING TO EAT. FOR SOME, COOKING IS A ROUTINE. FOR OTHERS, AN ART.

A NEW MEDIUM

In 1982, Jenny Holzer's conceptual art received recognition when the Public Art Fund of New York invited her to display her Truisms on the Spectracolor Board in Times Square. This was the first time that Holzer used an electronic display sign. The sign consists of arrays of LEDs (light-emitting diodes) that are activated by a computer to produce traveling text and graphics in different colors, speeds and presentation styles. By using this medium, which can produce short, quick messages, Holzer captured the limited attention-span of people walking along the streets. The messages could be viewed for as little as three seconds or as much as thirty minutes, if the person chose to watch the whole program.

Motivated by this new medium, Holzer searched through the New York Yellow Pages to find companies that sold LED signs. Since her introduction to electronic display signs, Holzer has consistently used this contemporary medium in her work.[5]

THE SURVIVAL SERIES (1983-1985): Holzer wrote the *The Survival Series* specifically for the LED format. She believed that survival is a modern preoccupation and that advertising reinforced this concept. A few examples from The Survival Series include:

MEN DON'T PROTECT YOU ANYMORE

GO WHERE PEOPLE SLEEP AND SEE IF THEY'RE SAFE

THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR WILL BE A SECRET

IF YOU HAD BEHAVED NICELY THE COMMUNISTS WOULDN'T EXIST

There is a list of additional examples from *The Survival Series* in the back of this section.

In addition, Holzer reinforced these messages through other forms of advertising:

1. She posted silver and black stickers carrying the message on garbage can lids, telephone booths, and parking meters.
2. She arranged for the text to become a public service message on MTV.
3. She reproduced the messages on caps, billboards and on the electronic displays at such places as banks, baggage carousels in airports and on scoreboards.

In both The Living Series and The Survival Series, the narrator's voice has a single viewpoint and continually addresses the listener by using the pronoun "you".

Holzer says, "**So I switched from being everybody to being myself. By then I was absolutely into the electronic sign romance, so, again, there was the play with an official or commercial format normally used for advertising or public service announcements. It was appropriate for an alternative public service message.**"[6]

INSTALLATIONS

UNDER A ROCK (1985-1987): In 1985, Holzer moved to Hoosick Falls, a small town east of Albany, New York. Even after her move, she continued to spend a considerable amount of time in New York City. Living in a rural environment, she became reacquainted with nature and

"But, my predecessors include everyone from the Conceptualists to the Dadaists and even back to some Utopian social theorists who advocated that things be made usable, enjoyable and comprehensible to anyone. This is not an unattractive goal for people to have. I think probably the most ambitious people who work with this try to make things not just accessible, but try to create the best possible stuff, the most interesting stuff, in a form anyone can get."[7]

Jenny Holzer

created a new series of text which was motivated by what Holzer described as "things that crawl out from underneath a rock." The ideas came from news stories, world events and personal concerns.

Under a Rock was Holzer's first formal, indoor installation in a gallery setting. **"I also wanted to attempt complete interior environments with color, movement, composition, light, atmosphere, form, the many elements that are considerations when you're making more traditional art."**[10] This transitional text led to other indoor installations.

To carry the content, "Holzer programmed two LED signs with a remarkable variety of visual effects. Two sizes of type were used, keyed to different word sequences that overlapped each other as they moved forward and backward at different speeds. Text and background changed color frequently in a manic, unpredictable rhythm, and the timing and spacing of words and phrases was shrewdly manipulated: They froze at odd moments, vanished, reappeared and disintegrated in a weird kind of short circuit self-obliteration."[11] One of these LED signs was displayed at the front of the gallery; the other was displayed in the back.

Holzer had the same Under a Rock text of the LEDs engraved into the tops of nine granite benches. These benches were arranged in rows in the center of the display area and faced the LED displays, like pews facing an altar in a chapel. "Under a Rock transformed the view area into a state-of-the-art temple."[12] The sound that filled the darkened environment was the dispassionate voice of a commentator, reporting while "watching horrific events—rape, murder, space [space shuttle, Challenger explosion], violence—and describing them as they happen, still in a relatively objective tone."[13] An example of this text is:

> AN OPPOSITION MAN IS CHASED THROUGH HIS TOWN AND SHOT IN A SMELLING TRAP. PEOPLE COME TO POKE LIVE FINGERS THROUGH THE HOLES IN HIM. THEY LOOK AT THEIR FINGERS TO DIVINE WHETHER THEY WILL BE SHOT. THEY SHRINK AND SWELL AND RUN TO HUNT THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATION WHO IS THE TRAPPER.

In this installation, Holzer combined the high-tech medium of LEDs, not usually considered for works of art, with the traditional sculptural medium of stone, used since ancient times to create art, tombstones and burial crypts. The chiseled granite benches represented tradition, permanence and memorial, while the buzz of flickering light in the arrays denoted a moment of violent news in comtemporary society. The reportorial voice of the commentator suggested isolation from involvement in the appalling events.

LAMENTS (1988-1989): This installation, which was supported by the Dia Arts Foundation, was exhibited in 1989 on their third floor. The space was darkened and included thirteen vertical LEDs attached to building support posts. These LEDs were located just outside of a narrow, inner room containing thirteen spot-lit inscribed granite crypts—ten of which were for adults, two for children, and one for an infant.

On the LEDs in the darkened outer room, the light traveled from floor to ceiling, changing text, color and speed in red, yellow and green—at one point to total darkness. The text consists of the last remarks of thirteen people, dead from various tragic causes—one from AIDS—relating how each individual died.[14] This is the first time Holzer used the

pronoun "I" in her text, to represent various individuals reflecting her own feelings and thoughts.

Holzer says about the installation, **"I thought a way to ward off death was to show the tragedy of thirteen people dead from various causes. The Laments also were a response to AIDS. The epidemic has been the first mass death in my experience since Vietnam. All this had something to do with us.ng sarcophagi and with writing the inscriptions that are the last remarks of thirteen individuals, lost for no good reason."**[15]

The feeling of this installation was like an armory or a cathedral serving as a temporary morgue. The text on the stone was the same text that appeared on the LEDs, but was carved in a formal, traditional typeface with serifs. This contrasted with the informal graphics and sans-serif type of the LED boards. The viewer came out of the darkness and entered into the lit room with the spotlight crypts. The juxtaposition of all of these elements in the installation created a mood that was both contemplative and surrealistic.

THE GUGGENHEIM INSTALLATION (1989-1990): In this installation, Holzer used 535-feet of LEDs wrapped around the organic spiral form of the parapet wall of the Guggenheim Museum, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. The text displayed on the LEDs was a retrospect of her previous writings.

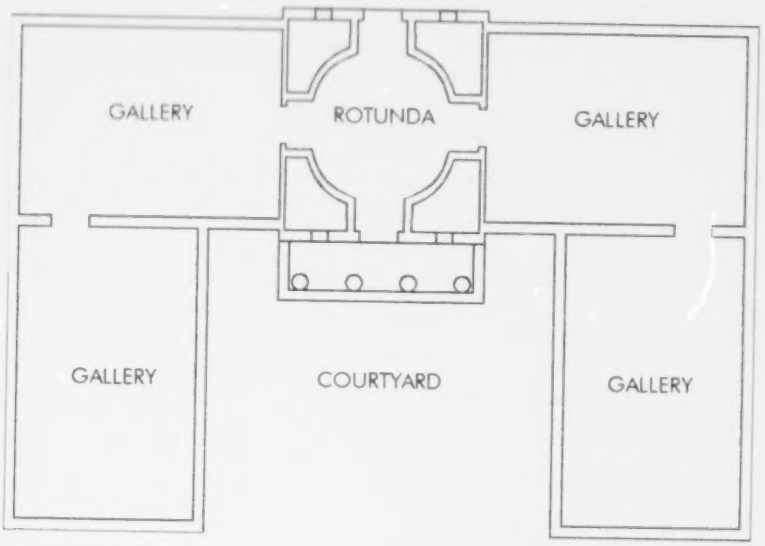
Below on the rotunda floor were seventeen, red-granite benches, carved with the text from the Survival Series and arranged to form a broken circle. Seated on these spot-lit benches in the darkened museum, viewers could look up and read the text or read it while walking up the spiral ramp. At the top of the incline were rows of white granite benches. All of the art work visible at the Guggenheim was Holzer's, as the museum's permanent collection had been removed for Holzer's installation. An art essayist wrote, "Through Holzer's manipulation, Wright's elegant circular form, an icon of modernist design, becomes a theatrical container for a peculiar kind of public event." [16]

THE 44TH VENICE BIENNALE INSTALLATION (1990): Holzer was chosen to represent the United States in the 44th Venice Biennale. She was the first woman and the youngest artist to be selected. Begun in 1895, the Venice Biennale is the oldest international exhibition in the world.

For her installation, Holzer used the United States' Pavilion with its four rooms, excluding the rotunda. She grouped two of the rooms under the title of Antechambers (darkened waiting rooms) and titled the other two rooms the Child Room and the Last Room.

1. **The First Antechamber** had a diamond patterned marble floor with alternating black and red marble tiles and a white marble border. Three benches with white marble tops and red marble legs were placed on the white border. From the entryway, the viewer could see the wall-length benches to the right, to the left, and along the back wall. Engraved on the tops of the benches was the Child Text, the central text of the adjoining Child Room. The diamond-shaped sections of red marble on the floor were engraved with a selection of Truisms which were lighted by spotlights. This room was considered a waiting room.
2. **The Child Room** had a large, red marble rectangle in the center with a black marble border surrounded by white plain, marble tiles in a

diamond pattern. The Child Text, which was influenced by the birth of her daughter, was engraved in the central, red-marble rectangle. On the back wall, the Child Text was displayed on twelve, vertical, three-color LED displays, which when activated, was reflected with movement and light on the marble floor.



3. **The Second Antechamber** had a diamoned patterned marble floor with alternating red and white marble tiles and a red marble border. On the red marble borders, to the right, left, and straight ahead of the entrance, were three wall-length benches with red marble tops and white marble legs. Engraved on the bench tops were the Inflammatory Essays. The red diamond tiles on the floor were engraved with a selection of Truisms, which were lighted by spotlights. This room was considered a waiting room.
4. **The Last Room** had a floor of plain, red marble tiles in a diamond-pattern with a red marble border. The left and the right walls each had five horizontal, three-color LED signs while the back wall had eleven. The texts displayed were a selection from Truisms, Inflammatory Essays, The Living Series, The Survival Series, Under A Rock, Laments, and the Child Text. These displays flashed in different colors, speeds, typefaces and languages—English, German, French, Italian and Spanish. The brightness, movement and color reflected vividly on the marble floor.

After the meditative quietness of the Anterooms, the electronic frenzy in the other two rooms, especially in the Last Room, almost drowned the viewers in stimuli and created a loss of depth perception. In conjunction with her exhibit, Holzer reached the public by using techniques similar to those she had employed in the past:

1. She sold t-shirts at souvenir stands
2. She pasted posters in the streets
3. She placed placards in a water bus
4. She arranged for television spots
5. She created stickers.

Holzer uses the newest technologies for her art form. In 1994, she worked on a virtual reality installation for the Guggenheim Museum SoHo, sponsored by the computer company Intel and programmed by Sense8 of Sausalito, California. Her main emphasis has always been to bring unusual content to a variety of audiences, including those people not apt to frequent art museums or art galleries. Through her work, Holzer continues to extend the boundaries of the world of art.

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES

Holzer uses light emitting diode signs, a contemporary, high tech medium not usually considered for creating works of art. An LED is a semiconductor device which, when a tiny amount of electrical current flows through it, emits light. The brightness of the light is determined by the amount of current; the color of the light depends on the chemical composition of the two alloys that join to make the diode. For example, two particular alloys of gallium phosphide mix together to create a red light. Any particular LED emits light of a very pure color, a slim line somewhere in the visible spectrum. The single color emitted by an LED can be contrasted to the light from a typical incandescent bulb, whose light includes most of the colors of the visual spectrum, as well as some not visible to the human eye. LEDs are often seen as the little colored indicator lights on a computer or telephone answering machine. Holzer usually fills the sign—which holds 15,000 characters or commands—to capacity. The smaller LED signs produce three colors: red, yellow and green. The larger signs are capable of producing other colors in addition to these basic three.[19] In Under a Rock, Holzer also incorporated the very traditional medium of sculpture; the granite crypts she used were carved by someone who normally makes tombstones.

Bruce Ferguson, "Wordsmith: An Interview with Jenny Holzer," Jenny Holzer: Signs (Des Moines: Des Moines Art Center, 1986) 65.

[2] Ferguson 66.

[3] Ferguson 68.

[4] Diane Waldman, Jenny Holzer, catalogue for the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1989) 10.

[5] Ferguson 66-69.

[6] Ferguson 96.

[7] Waldman 10.

[8] Waldman 10.

[9] Ferguson 70.

[10] Nancy Grimes, "Jenny Holzer, Barbara Gladstone," Artnews Feb. 1987: 92.

[11] Holland Cotter, "Jenny Holzer at Barbara Gladstone," Art in America Dec. 1986: 137-138.

[12] Grimes 128-129.

[13] Waldman 10.

[14] Ferguson 9.

[15] Michael Auping, Jenny Holzer (Universe Series on Women Artists) 93.

[16] Auping 47.

[17] Ferguson 68.

[18] Ferguson 95.

[19] Jeanne Siegel, "Jenny Holzer's Language Games," Arts Magazine Dec. 1985: 68.

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Additional Examples from Survival Series (1983-1985)

YOU ARE TRAPPED ON THE EARTH SO YOU WILL EXPLODE

WHAT URGE WILL SAVE US NOW THAT SEX WON'T?

PUT FOOD OUT IN THE SAME PLACE EVERY DAY AND TALK TO THE PEOPLE WHO COME TO EAT AND ORGANIZE THEM

THE BREAKDOWN COMES WHEN YOU STOP CONTROLLING YOURSELF AND WANT THE RELEASE OF A BLOODBATH

SPIT ALL OVER SOMEONE WITH A MOUTHFUL OF MILK IF YOU WAN TO FIND OUT SOMETHING ABOUT HIS PERSONALITY FAST

IN A DREAM YOU SAW A WAY TO SURVIVE AND YOU WERE FULL OF JOY

WHEN YOU EXPECT FAIR PLAY YOU CREATE AN INFECTIOUS BUBBLE OF MADNESS AROUND YOU

MEN DON'T PROTECT YOU ANYMORE

THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR WILL BE SECRET

WHAT COUNTRY SHOULD YOU ADOPT IF YOU HATE POOR PEOPLE?

USE WHAT IS DOMINANT IN A CULTURE TO CHANGE IT QUICKLY

PROTECT ME FROM WHAT I WANT

YOU ARE CAUGHT THINKING ABOUT KILLING ANYONE YOU WANT

YOU CAN'T REACH PEOPLE WHO CAN KILL YOU ANY TIME SO YOU HAVE TO GO HOME AND THINK ABOUT WHAT TO DO

GO WHERE PEOPLE SLEEP AND SEE IF THEY'RE SAFE

TURN SOFT AND LOVELY ANY TIME YOU HAVE A CHANCE

LET YOUR HAND WANDER ON FLESH TO MAKE POSSIBILITY MULTIPLY

BODIES LIE IN THE BRIGHT GRASS AND SOME ARE MURDERED AND SOME ARE PICNICKING

FINDING EXTREME PLEASURE WILL MAKE YOU A BETTER PERSON IF YOU'RE CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT THRILLS YOU

WHEN THERE IS NO SAFE PLACE TO SLEEP YOU'RE TIRED FROM WALKING ALL DAY AND EXHAUSTED FROM THE NIGHT BECAUSE IT'S TWICE AS DANGEROUS THEN

IF YOU HAD BEHAVED NICELY THE COMMUNISTS WOULDN'T EXIST

SAVOR KINDNESS BECAUSE CRUELTY IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE LATER

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Jenny Holzer

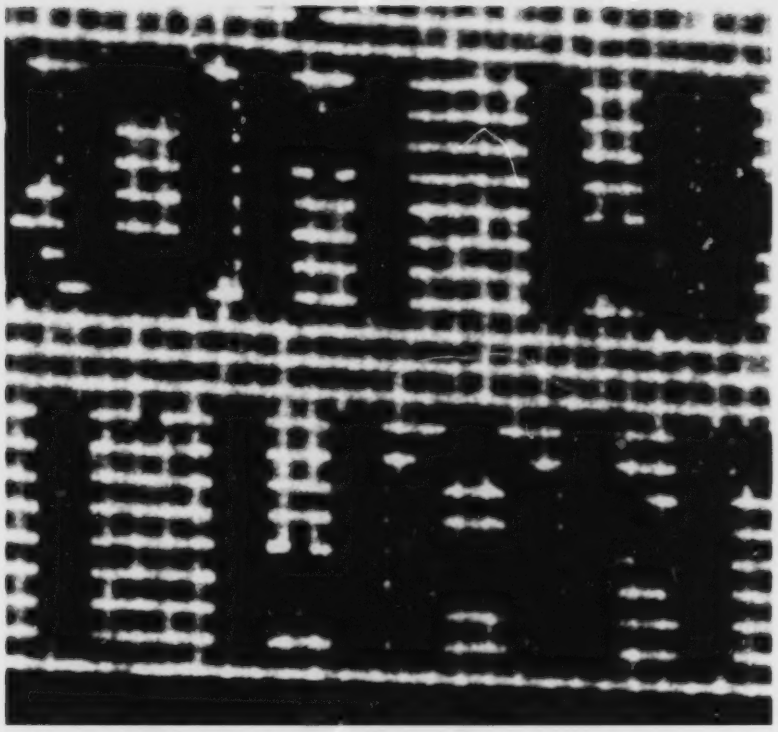

IMAGE: Detail from Protect Me From What I Want
Selection from the Survival Series 1985-86
MEDIUM: Spectracolor Board, Installation
LOCATION: Las Vegas, Nevada, 1986

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for aesthetics before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn To:

- examine different theories of art
- discuss various criteria for valuing art
- analyze *Protect Me From What I Want* from a variety of philosophical viewpoints
- develop logical arguments based on sound reasoning

AESTHETIC THEORIES:

The following theories present different viewpoints from which we can consider works of art. They are summarized in the boxes below in language appropriate for your students. Introduce and/or review the theories if necessary.

IMITATIONALISM
Literal Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the realistic presentation of subject matter. A work is successful if it looks like and reminds us of what we see in the real world.

FORMALISM
Visual Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the effective organization of the elements of art through the arrangement of visual principles.

EXPRESSIONISM
Emotional Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the vivid communication of moods, feelings and ideas to the viewer.

INSTRUMENTALISM
Functional Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is that it serves a function that is practical or furthers moral, religious, social or political points of view.

INSTITUTIONALISM
Contextual Classification

The most important thing about a work of art is the context in which it exists and in which it is validated by the artworld.

Theories:

Imitationalism

Formalism

Expressionism

Instrumentalism

Institutionalism

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AESTHETIC QUESTIONS:

Organize your students for a discussion. Work with your entire class or divide students into groups. Discuss one or more of the following aesthetic questions. In addition to a discussion, you may choose to ask students to write their answers to the questions and present them to the class.

1. Jenny Holzer is thought by some to be one of the most controversial artists of contemporary times. Because her work challenges our assumptions about art and society, it provides us with the opportunity to discuss a variety of aesthetic issues. Must an idea be expressed through a visual image, or can language alone express an idea artistically? Why or why not?
2. Is art meant to be for everyone or is it only for a special group of people who have studied it?
3. Should art be available to everyone through posters, T-shirts, and caps? Is art only art when it is one-of-a-kind? Does the mass production of a work of art diminish or change its value? Explain your answers.
4. Sometimes Holzer uses words in her text that are not considered to be in good taste. Consequently, some of her works have been dismantled or have had their content changed before installation. Do you think artists should be submitted to or protected from censorship? Why or why not?
5. A sign is an ordinary object. Can an ordinary object be art? Why or why not?
6. Artist Marcel Duchamp appropriated ordinary objects which he did not make and used them to create works of art. In a similar manner, Holzer used the LED Spectracolor Board as her art form. In your opinion, is it necessary to make something with your own hands for it to be art? In your opinion, is *Protect Me From What I Want* a work of art? What aesthetic theory supports your opinion?

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Jenney Holzer

FOR THE TEACHER
ART PRODUCTION GUIDE

"Thoughts on Our Times"

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art production before beginning this component of the lesson.

TEACHER PREPARATION:

1. Read the "Art Production Guide" and "Student Planning Guide" for Jenny Holzer.
2. Duplicate the "Student Planning Guide" and the "Thumbnail Sketches Worksheet".
3. Prepare the necessary art materials. Prepare to demonstrate any studio techniques as needed. Practice with the materials before you begin.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS: *glue, paper, pencils, pen and ink or markers, rulers, letters cut from magazines or newspapers, tape, scissors, lettering books, access to computer, typewriter, label maker and school copier.*

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4. Plan your schedule to allow time for your students to research, investigate, explore, create, reflect and assess their learning.
5. The criteria for the following art production activity are based on the work of Jenny Holzer. The list below is a summary of the characteristics of her work. Use this list as a reference for review.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF HOLZER'S WORK:

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- used black and white
- used only letter shapes to convey the idea or message
- used uniform letter and size
- matched the font style to the content of message and media

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM:

- expressed a social message from an anonymous writer
- conveyed message to the viewer

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- used off-set printing and LED's
- used new technologies to create uniform forms of expression
- used sculptural techniques and methods

ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY:

Ask your students to design and create a handbill that conveys a message concerning a contemporary social issue.

CRITERIA FOR ART PRODUCTION:

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- use black and white
- use letter shapes to convey the idea or message
- use uniform letter-size and capitals
- use a font style that is consistent with the content of message and media

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM :

- convey a message concerning a social issue

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- use appropriate materials for producing and reproducing type
- demonstrate skillful use of media
- exhibit handbill in a public place

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ART PRODUCTION WITH THE CLASS:

PREPARATION

1. Review the characteristics of Holzer's work.
2. Distribute the Student Planning Guide. Read it with your students and check for their understanding.
3. Introduce the art production activity and criteria.
4. Introduce or review vocabulary as needed.

PRACTICE

1. Discuss possible ideas for a contemporary social issue.
2. Practice writing statements with your students using the concepts presented.
3. Devote one class period to writing.

PRESENTATION:

1. Present the following information about typefaces and how they are used to help convey a message. Illustrate the difference between sans serif and serif type faces.
2. Discuss how different typefaces can express different moods or ideas. Have your students look through magazines and notice how type is used in advertising to convey meaning. For example, an Old English typeface would be appropriate for a biblical message, a handwritten note would be appropriate for a graffiti style, while different letters cut from a magazine would be appropriate for a party invitation. A formal typeface would be appropriate for a traditional announcement; an informal typeface for a personal note.
3. Illustrate how the placement, size, and character of a word or letter can also convey meaning. Example: "roller coaster" spelled with letters that are placed in an up and downward curve.

Formal typeface and font names (serif)	Bookman Caslon Openface Fenice Garamond Book Onyx Wedding Text Zapf Elliptical	H This type of letter form might be used for children's parties, less formal events, beach parties, cookouts, personal events. serif
Informal typeface and font names (sans serif)	Avant Garde Dom Casual Futura Condensed Helvetica Industria INFORMAL 011 Mister Earl	H This type of letter form might be used for more formal documents, such as, birth, marriage, and death certificates, diplomas, awards and engraved invitations to very special occasions.

VOCABULARY:

Aphorism—
a definition, a short pithy sentence (1) a short concise statement of a principle. (2) a maxim; a short, pointed sentence containing some important truth or precept

Homily—
(1) a discourse or sermon read or pronounced to an audience (2) a serious admonition or exhortation upon a course of conduct; a tedious, moralizing lecture

Metaphor—
a figure of speech in which one thing is likened to another, different thing by being spoken of as if it were that other

Parody—
to imitate (a poem, story, music, art, dance or theater) the characteristic style of some other work by treating a serious subject in a nonsensical manner in an attempt at humor or ridicule

> Example: "Say, NO TO DRUGS" could be "Say, NO TO BUGS" on the side of an exterminator's truck.

Sans serif—
a style of printing type with no serifs. An example, I

Serif—
a style of printing type with serifs, that is, fine lines that cross the top and bottom of a letter. An example, I

PRODUCTION:

1. Have your students begin working with the Student Planning Guide, sections I through V.
2. Introduce any media and techniques as needed.
3. Have your students complete the art production activity.

ASSESSMENT:

1. The Student Planning Guide asks your students to assess their own learning. After they have completed their written evaluations, gather your class for a group discussion. Ask your students to review the criteria and discuss their own work in relation to those criteria. Encourage your students to use their written comments to support their remarks.
2. Use information from your students' written assessments and group discussion to assist you in your final assessment. Your students work and their planning guides provide useful information for portfolio assessment.
3. Exhibit your students' artwork.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS FOR THIS UNIT:

1. Ask your students to make handbill dealing with an important issue at school.
2. Have students write a series of Truisms. Select several and silk-screen T-shirts and caps with their statements.
3. Create a bulletin board where students can write their own Truisms.

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Name Date

Jenny Holzer

STUDENT PLANNING GUIDE

"Thoughts On Our Times"

This worksheet is designed to help you develop an idea for your art production. These exercises will help organize your thoughts to create a powerful statement and composition.

Conceptual artist, Jenny Holzer, used the modern technology of the LEDs to bring her social messages to the public.

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I. ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Your challenge is to design and create a handbill that conveys a message concerning a contemporary social issue.

CRITERIA FOR ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Incorporate the following criteria into your handbill.

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- use black and white
- use letter shapes to convey the idea or message
- use uniform letter-size and capitals
- use a font style that is consistent with the content of message and media

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM:

- convey a message concerning a social issue

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- use appropriate materials for producing and reproducing type
- demonstrate skillful use of media
- exhibit handbill in a public place

II. RESEARCH/HOMEWORK/ART JOURNAL

Use the resources in your environment such as newspapers, magazines, radio or television for ideas. Identify several social issues that are of concern to people today. Discuss several issues with your friends, teachers or family members. Cut out two news articles from your newspaper or from magazines that you think are important. Some ideas might include:

-recycling	-poverty	-support for the arts
-pollution	-homelessness	-crime
-daycare	-censorship	-drinking and driving

III. BRAINSTORMING/GETTING AN IDEA

Collect information on the two ideas you feel are important. Explain the issues you have selected and discuss why they are important to you in the space below.

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IV. SELECTION

Select the idea you would like to communicate through your handbill. Write your statement below.

V. DESIGN/PREPARE SKETCHES

Search for a variety of typefaces and select the one that most effectively expresses your statement. Make a series of thumbnail sketches on the worksheet. Experiment with a variety of ways to arrange your type and consider several design possibilities for your handbill. Circle the design that most effectively communicates your intent.

VI. MATERIALS

Discuss your sketches and the materials you will need to complete your handbill with your teacher. List the materials and/or equipment you will need below.

VII. PRODUCTION

(Fill out during the production of your work of art.) Complete your handbill and reproduce it ten times on a copy machine. Plan a design to display your handbills. Draw a series of sketches of possible arrangements on the back of your thumbnail sketch worksheet. Select the one that offers the best solution. Be sure to obtain permission to display your work. Anonymously record your viewers' responses and be prepared to present them in class. Analyze any problems you experienced while working and note them below.

VIII. SELF-ASSESSMENT

(Fill out after the completion of your assignment.) The assessment of your work is based on the criteria listed in Section I. Review the criteria before you assess your work.

How effectively does your work meet the criteria?

In your own words, state what it is you have learned by doing this activity.

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Jenny Holzer

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*These books and articles have a wealth of information and are easily accessible to supplement your teaching unit.

Käthe Kollwitz

Käthe Kollwitz

ART CRITICISM

IMAGE: Detail from Downtrodden, 1900
MEDIUM: Etching and aquatint on paper
LOCATION: The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.
SIZE: 9-3/4" x 12-1/8"

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art criticism before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn To:

- describe and analyze the elements of art in works of art
- interpret the meaning of works of art
- make informed judgments about works of art based on various criteria
- recognize and interpret the artist's intent

Organize your class for a discussion about Käthe Kollwitz's The Downtrodden. Display the art reproduction in a prominent place for viewing. Use the following questions to guide your students in an in-depth discussion. The possible responses that follow each group of questions are included to help support the discussion.

DESCRIPTION:

QUESTIONS

Let's begin our discussion by listing everything we see in the work of art.

How many people are in the work?

What are they wearing?

What are they doing?

What other details do you notice?

How would you describe the surrounding environment?

What materials and techniques were used to create the work?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

There are three people in the work. Two adults and one child.

The women is wearing a dress tied with a belt at the waist and a jacket or sweater. The man appears to be wearing pants, a shirt and a jacket. The child is wearing something, but because most of the child's body is not visible, it is difficult to describe the clothing.

The man is standing with his arm raised so that his hand covers his face. Only part of his face and one ear are visible. He appears to be looking downward. In his unraised hand, the man is holding a loop of rope tied with two knots.

The woman is sitting in a slumped position. She is also looking downward.

She is holding the child between her knees, with the child's head resting in one of her hands. The other hand is holding a strand of the child's hair.

The child is pale. The eyes of the child are closed.

There are no objects in the surrounding environment. It is a solid dark area.

This art work is a etching and aquatint on paper.

ANALYSIS:

QUESTIONS

What colors are in this image?

How did the artist use value? Are there a few values or are there many?

What are the brightest areas of the etching? What are the darkest areas? From where does the light appear to be coming?

Do the forms appear to be three dimensional?

Does the use of value create the illusion of depth? How?

What types of shapes did the artist use to create the figures?

How did the artist use line? Are the lines uniform or varied?

Are the lines thick or thin, straight or curved?

Does the use of line contribute to the illusion of three dimensional form? How?

Do the shapes overlap? If so, where? What effect does the overlapping create in the work?

How is the element of texture used? Are there a variety of textures?

Are there areas in the image that are strongly emphasized? If so, where and how are they emphasized?

Do any of the elements repeat throughout the image? If so where?

How is contrast created in the image?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

There is one color of black-brown printed on beige paper.

The values create the three dimensional form of the figures. The artist created a range of light, medium and dark values with one color.

The brightest areas of the etching are the face of the child and the woman.

The light appears to be coming from the upper right hand corner down in a diagonal direction to the face of the child.

The least bright areas are the dark areas of the figures' clothing and the background.

The forms overlap to create depth.

The forms appear to be three-dimensional because the light values appear to come forward and the dark values appear to recede.

The values and shapes repeat throughout the work of art.

The artist used predominately rounded shapes to create the human forms.

The lines are dominant. The image is composed of both straight and curved lines. The artist used many thin, thick and overlapping lines.

The texture is consistent throughout the image because of the use of line.

The changes of color, value and texture throughout the work create contrast.

The elements of line and texture repeat throughout the work of art.

INTERPRETATION:

QUESTIONS

Who are the people in this image?

What are they doing? Did something just occur?

How is the rope intended to be used? What does the rope symbolize?

Why is the man covering his face? Is he confused? Grieving?

What is this etching about? Is it about a particular family?

What was the artist's intent in creating this image?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

The people in the image are a family.

The mother is holding the child and the father is holding a noose in his hand. He reaches out to hand the noose to the woman while covering his face with one hand. The woman is looking downward and does not reach for the rope. The child looks very pale and near death.

The noose represents death.

The child appears peaceful but the parents are in despair. Their gestures suggest that they are turning inward with their grief. They are surrounded with darkness.

The people are poor, working class people as suggested by their plain clothing and lack of jewelry.

The print is stark and enhances the idea of death.

Announce the artist, title and date of the work of art

A confirmation check from outside sources is used to support the interpretation of the work. Present the following confirmation check to your students. Compare the experts' statements with the students' interpretations. Are they similar? Different? Ask your students to respond to the experts' statements.

CONFIRMATION CHECK:

Käthe Kollwitz lived in a poor industrial working class neighborhood in Berlin, Germany for fifty years (1891-1941). Her husband, a doctor, was in charge of a medical clinic for tailors in the woolen and clothing industries. People came to the cities to find employment in the new factories. They lived in inexpensive housing with many people and poor sanitation facilities which bred tuberculosis and other health problems.[1]

About her work Kollwitz said, "....my real motive for choosing my subjects almost exclusively from the life of the workers was that only such subjects gave me in a simple and unqualified way what I felt to be beautiful...the broad freedom of movement in the gestures of the common people had beauty."[2]

It wasn't until later that she fully understood their plight. This understanding affected her; it was necessary to continue to use the lower class over and over again as the subject for her art. Kollwitz used printmaking to make unlimited copies of her works of art inexpensively so that they were available to the common people--the ones she observed daily. Her printmaking skills included etching, intaglio, drypoint, lithography and woodcuts.

After the confirmation check, continue to Judgment

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JUDGMENT:

QUESTIONS

Is this etching an important work of art? Why?

Did the artist successfully achieve her intent? How?

What criteria are you using to support your opinion?

Does the artist's skill with the medium contribute to its success?

Does Kollwitz's realistic style contribute to the success of the work? Why or why not?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

Downtrodden is a powerful and expressive etching. The subject matter presents the struggles associated with poverty and the grief of losing a child.

The artist was successful in achieving her intent to express her empathy for the common people by presenting an intimate view of the grieving parents. The faces and bodily gestures of the figures express their feelings of grief and suffering.

The technical skill displayed in the etching is excellent and contributes to the success of the work.

Kollwitz's use of line and value is masterful.

The realistic style is a very effective means to express the reality of the grief and sorrow of the people.

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[1] Elizabeth Prelinger. Kathe Kollwitz Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art; (New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 1992) 96.

[2] The Diary and Letters of Käthe Kollwitz trans. Richard and Clara Winston, ed. Hans Kollwitz, (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1988) 43.

ART CRITICISM ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #1

1. Ask your students to research how the family has been depicted in art throughout time and across cultures. Have each student select a work of art that shows a family as the subject matter.
2. Ask them to write a comparative essay on the *Downtrodden* by Kollwitz and the art work they select, using the processes of description, analysis, interpretation and judgement. Encourage and support the use of primary sources whenever possible. Publish their writings in the school newspaper.

ACTIVITY #2

Ask students to contrast and compare the work of Käthe Kollwitz with the works of the following artists:

- Albrecht Dürer
- Alice Neel
- Faith Ringgold
- Mary Ellen Mark
- Mary Cassatt
- Japanese woodcuts
- Edvard Munch
  The Sick Child
- Vincent Van Gogh
  The Potato Eaters

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ART HISTORY

Käthe Kollwitz

Käthe Kollwitz, 1927, Courtesy of Founders Society Detroit Institute of Arts

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art history before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn:

- about the artist's life
- how life experiences (social, political, economical) influence the artist
- about the artist's media and technique
- about the artist's intent and the context of the work of art

In 1907, Käthe Kollwitz was awarded the Villa Romana Prize, established by renowned printmaker Max Klinger, to study and travel in Florence, Italy. In 1919, she was honored with becoming the first woman member and professor of the Prussian Academy of Art.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FAMILY INFLUENCES

Käthe Kollwitz (Kå-th Kol-vitz) was born July 8, 1867 in Köenigsberg, Russia (today Kaliningrad), the fifth child to Karl Schmidt and Katherina Rupp Schmidt.[1] Her father was a building contractor, a master mason who was also trained in law. When Kollwitz's father discarded his building designs, she and her siblings often used the paper to make their own drawings. Eventually, their father began to save their artwork. When Kollwitz was nine, the family moved into a new house which her father had built. After this move, Kollwitz began going on long unsupervised explorations with her younger sister through the town and down to the waterfront. She found the movement of longshore workers, foreign sailors and fish vendors beautiful. Her life long interest in the world of the worker began on these walks.

A person of great influence for all of the Schmidts was Kollwitz's grandfather, Julius Rupp. He was the founder of a liberal Protestant community called the Free Religious Congregation, a group which rebelled against state-controlled religion. The Free Religious Congregation emphasized ethics and the ideals of early Christianity. After Rupp's Sunday morning sermons, he usually hosted a gathering at his home in which he would spend an hour discussing not only religion, but also social heroes who had fallen during the March Revolution of 1848. This revolution was one of the many popular uprisings that occurred throughout Europe during the mid-1800s. With the people of Berlin demanding democratic reform—including a call for a new constitution, less power to the king and an end to censhorship—King Frederick William was compelled to assemble troops to counter the masses. These troops were responsible for the deaths of 184 martyrs who sacrificed their lives for democracy.[2] When Kollwitz's grandfather died, her father took over the leadership of the Free Religious Community. His concerns were less religious than Rupp's and were more related to social responsibility. The general atmosphere in which Kollwitz was raised was one of social and moral idealism with abundant discussions of politics, literature, history and philosophy.[3] This influence would be with her throughout her life and art.

EDUCATION AND TRAVEL

At fourteen, Kollwitz began art lessons. She once wrote, **"By now my father had long since realized that I was gifted at drawing. The fact gave him great pleasure and he wanted me to have all the training I needed to become an artist. Unfortunately I was a girl, but nevertheless he was ready to risk it. He assumed that I would not be much distracted by love affairs, since I was not a pretty girl; and he was all the more disappointed and angry later on when at the age of only seventeen I became engaged to Karl Kollwitz."**[4]

It was in that summer of her fourteenth year that Kollwitz studied in Köenigsberg with an engraver named Rudolf Maurer. She drew from plaster casts and copied masters drawings. **"I was hard-working and conscientious....I had a clear aim and direction....I wanted my education to be in art alone. If I could, I would have saved all my intellectual powers and turned them exclusively to use in my art, so that this flame alone would burn brightly."**[5] Eventually she drew from life, with her younger sister often acting as her model.

In 1884, Kollwitz traveled to Engadin, Switzerland with her mother and younger sister. On the way, they stopped at the art centers of Berlin and Munich. In Berlin, Kollwitz met the not yet famous writer Gerhardt Hauptmann, whose play titled *The Weavers* would later inspire her work of art, *Downtrodden*. In Munich, she visited the museums and discovered the work of Peter Paul Rubens. Overwhelmed, Kollwitz believed that her favorite poet, Goethe, and Rubens 'formed one complete whole' for her.[6]

ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN ARTISTS IN BERLIN

Upon Kollwitz's arrival in Berlin in 1885 on the anniversary of the March Revolution of 1848, her brother, who was attending the university there, took her to the cemetery where the 184 martyrs of the Revolution were buried. Workers came to pay tribute and place wreaths on the graves. In the years to come, Kollwitz would often revisit the cemetery on the anniversary. She also made a lithograph to commemorate the Revolution.[7]

Excluded from the Berlin Academy of Art because she was a woman, Kollwitz started her formal art training at the Painting School of the Association of Women Artists (1885-1886), where she would return years later to teach drawing and etching classes (1898). As a student, she studied under Swiss artist, Karl Stauffer-Bern who encouraged her to draw rather than paint. Through him, she discovered the work of graphic artist Max Klinger, who is considered the father of modern printmaking. His cycle of fifteen etchings entitled *A Life* was about contemporary life and was much discussed at the time. Kollwitz attended the exhibition of his works, an experience that was a major influence on her later decision to become a graphic artist.

The usual procedure for printmaking of that time was for the artist to draw an idea on paper, whereupon a craftsman etched the drawing onto plates and completed the printing process. Klinger was the exception. He etched and printed his work himself and created fourteen major print cycles. His etchings consisted of a visual narrative or theme about contemporary social issues or allegory which unfolded through a series of prints like an epic drama. In his theory, Klinger believed the print to be a monochromatic, critical tool which dealt with the "weakness, sharpness, hardness and evil" of society, whereas painting had a tendency to beautify things with color. He believed that graphic art or printmaking was a worthy medium equal to painting. These ideas were published in Klinger's 1891 treatise which argued that drawing was sometimes more appropriate than painting for certain subject matter. Klinger's work and ideas remained with Kollwitz all of her life. They were reflected not only in her choice of medium, but in her choice of subject matter as well.[8]

THE WOMEN'S SCHOOL OF ART IN MUNICH

Kollwitz returned home to Köenisburg with hopes of continuing her studies with Stauffer-Bern during the following winter in Berlin, but Stauffer-Bern passed away in Italy. Unable to study with Stauffer-Bern,

"I intend to have an effect on these times, in which human beings are so at a loss and so helpless."[14]

Käthe Kollwitz

she took lessons in Köenigsberg for awhile with Emil Neide. In 1888 and 1889, Kollwitz's father sent her to study at the Women's School of Art at the Munich Academy of Art in hopes that her engagement to Karl Kollwitz, a medical student, would lapse while she was away. While there, she studied painting with Ludwig Herterich and learned etching as well. In Munich, she learned more about art as well as literature and drama. She was introduced to Emile Zola's novel, *Germinal*, about coal miners on strike in France and August Bebel's book on women and socialism which discussed social democracy and the oppression of women.

THE WEAVERS IN BERLIN

Kollwitz had often agonized over how she could continue to be an artist if she were to marry and have children. After seven years of hesitation, in 1891, she married Karl Kollwitz and moved into a working class section of Berlin. She lived on Weissenburgerstrasse for fifty-two years. Karl Kollwitz practiced socialized medicine for the poor residents who worked in the woolen and clothing factories and tailor shops. The couple had two sons, Hans (1892) and Peter (1896).[9]

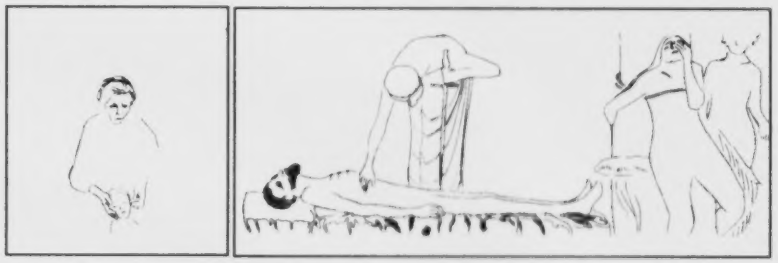
It was in this working class neighborhood that Käthe Kollwitz's life changed as she began to recognize the tragic social problems of proletarian life. In the winter of 1893, she attended Hauptmann's play *The Weavers*. "The play dramatized the desperate plight and revolt in 1840 of the Silesian weavers, who earned a precarious living with hand looms. These disturbances in the 1840s were really part of the great industrial revolution which swept Europe, a conflict between the factory and the home, the power loom and hand work."[10] Kollwitz was so moved by the play that she began her first major print cycle, *The Weavers' Rebellion*, which took five years to complete. She dedicated the series to her father who had become critically ill and presented the prints to him on his seventieth birthday.

Kollwitz felt that her ability and experience in etching was limited, so the first three prints in *The Weaver's Rebellion* were lithographs entitled *Poverty, Death, Council/Conspiracy* and the last three were etchings entitled *March of the Weavers, Storming the Gate/Riot and End*. In this print cycle, she illustrated the plight of exploited workers from a sympathetic point of view through body language and gesture. Kollwitz exhibited this work at the Greater Berlin Art Exposition in 1898. For the first time, she was nationally recognized as a major artist. The jury agreed to award her the small gold medal, but Kaiser Wilhelm II vetoed the prize because of the revolutionary political message in the prints.

Initially, in *The Weaver's Rebellion*, there was a seventh print entitled *From Many Wounds You Bleed, O People* which would have concluded the series .[11] This last print was divided into three parts making it a triptych which is usually associated with an altarpiece—with symbolic or iconographic images. The center panel included: (1) a figure bent over a sword and touching a dead nude male—symbolizing Christ and Justice, who places his hand on Christ's wound and (2) on either side, a nude female bound to a column—symbolizing Poverty and Shame of the poor. This work was not included in the print cycle because its symbolism was inconsistent with the everyday realism of the other prints.

However, in 1900, Kollwitz reworked her idea and renamed it *The Downtrodden* (also known as *Life*). This print was divided into three

parts, printed separately and pasted together. The new left panel included a seated woman with a child between her knees and a man handing her a rope—a working class equivalent to the traditional Holy Family. The center panel included the same image as before—symbolizing Christ and Justice. The right panel combined the two nude females bound to a single column—symbolizing Poverty and Shame. Later Kollwitz disowned *The Downtrodden* for being sentimental with the exception of the scene of the family which is also known by the same name.



PEASANTS' WAR

Kollwitz's next print cycle, *Peasants' War*, was based on the Reformation in Germany and the intolerable working conditions of the peasants. She received a commission for this series (1903-1908) from the Society for Historical Art. In this cycle of seven prints, she created a rough narrative sequence of the stages of a revolution. The first two prints show crimes committed against the peasants (*Plowers and Woman, Raped*); the third and fourth prints show the preparation for their revolt (*Whetting the Scythe, Arming in a Vault*); the fifth print is a scene of the battle (*Outbreak*) and the final two prints are images of the defeat of the peasants (*Battlefield and The Prisoners*). Kollwitz's work expressed the suffering victims of the feudal system. To be able to render the expressive content of the images, she experimented with numerous gestures and explored new surface textures which were crucial to her intent of communicating social messages to the population in order to change society.

MOTHER WITH DEAD CHILD

The recurring theme of a mother cradling a dead child has become synonymous with Kollwitz. At the beginning of the century, many artists depicted a more sentimental, tender view of mother and child. Kollwitz's portrayal was sometimes shocking. In 1903, her lifelong

"I have the right as an artist to extract the emotional content from everything, to let things take their effect on me and to give them external form.[15]"

Käthe Kollwitz

MOTHER WITH DEAD CHILD

The recurring theme of a mother cradling a dead child has become synonymous with Kollwitz. At the beginning of the century, many artists depicted a more sentimental, tender view of mother and child. Kollwitz's portrayal was sometimes shocking. In 1903, her lifelong friend, Beate Bonus-Jeep described her print titled *Woman with Dead Child* with this passage: "A mother, animal-like, naked, the light-colored corpse of her dead child between her thigh bones and arms, seeks with her eyes, with her lips, with her breath, to swallow back into herself the disappearing life that once belonged to her womb."[12] This description captured the feeling expressed in the print of a grief stricken mother.

In 1908-1909, Kollwitz's work began to reflect a more simplified style of art. It was still a figurative style which ignored the avant-garde styles of Cubism, German Expressionism and eventually Abstract Expressionism which did not fit her purpose. She explored color for a few years but felt her work was better suited to painting than to printmaking. As her concern and commitment to use art as social commentary increased, she struggled constantly to find the media that would best express her ideas. She experimented with everything from etching to lithography to wood block printing. The elements of her style were simplified, stark and spontaneous, with a degree of distortion using the human figure to convey social problems.

The years between 1910 to 1918 were a very difficult period in Kollwitz's life. Her sons volunteered for World War I, in which her younger son, Peter, was killed . This event seriously affected her, and eventually led her to become a confirmed pacifist. In the light of this new realization, her art changed. She conceded that the idea of revolution to change social conditions was no longer an appropriate subject and became an advocate for peace. Later, she was given the Order of Pour le Merite (1929) for her work on peace.

HER POSTERS

Throughout her career, Kollwitz devoted time to produce commercial posters about social concerns which made a direct appeal to the masses. Some examples of these works were German Home Industries Exhibit, which included a series of fourteen posters between 1906-1911 and two in 1924, *For Greater Berlin* (1912), *Help Russia* (1921) and *Never Again War!* (1924). In addition, she drew illustrations presenting social criticism of poverty which were published for the satirical, liberal weekly newspaper *Simplicissimus*.

One of the recurring themes in Käthe Kollwitz's work was herself. She made many powerful self-portraits throughout her years as an artist. Near the end of her life, she produced a print cycle entitled *Death* (1934-1935). In this series of eight lithographs, she illustrated different ways of dying. One work, *Call of Death*, portrays a peaceful Kollwitz reaching, without fear, for the skeletal hand of Death.

THE WAR PRINT CYCLE

Kollwitz's next print cycle was entitled *War* (1924), but did not contain any images of combat or destruction. Rather, this cycle presented prints centered on scenes from the homefront, the women and children and the

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sacrifices they endured. This cycle of prints offered a warning against history repeating itself. The woodcuts in this series are titled *Sacrifice, The Volunteers, The Parents, The Mothers, The Widows and The People.* "Everything is expression, gesture and iconic form. In keeping with her wish that the series should travel the world with its message, Kollwitz adopted a stark black and white language of signs that would be universally understood. They are unencumbered by particulars that would restrict them to a specific time or place."[15]

HER SCULPTURE AND THE WAR

In 1933, with the rise of Hitler and Nazism, Kollwitz, along with other socialists and pacifists, tried to unite a group against him. She resigned from the Prussian Academy of Art and was forbidden to exhibit her work even though it was not considered to be "degenerate art". Kollwitz continued printmaking until 1942. However, because of the war, it became impossible to print editions and because many people fled Germany before the war, the artworld that had supported her had greatly diminished.

At this time, it was easier for Kollwitz to create sculpture. This interest began with her trip to Paris in 1904, where she studied at the Julian Academy for women artists. While there, Kollwitz visited the studio of Rodin on a number of occasions. These visits were largely responsible for her lifelong interest in sculpture. Most of her sculptures were made during the 1930s and early 1940s when materials and casting were severely limited because of the war. As a result, it took her seventeen years to produce a monument to her son, Peter.

THE FINAL YEARS

Kollwitz's husband, Karl, died in 1940 and her grandson, Peter was killed in World War II. In 1943, she left Berlin because of the bombings. Her house was destroyed with much of her work and printing plates.

Käthe Kollwitz lived through harsh social and political times—the unity of the German Empire, the Weimar Republic, World Wars I and II and the reign of the Third Reich of Adolf Hitler. She did not belong to any specific political party, yet many political groups—including the National Socialist party and the Communist party—adopted her work for their own causes. Kollwitz felt that her social responsibility was to be an artist and an advocate against human suffering in the world.

MEDIA & TECHNIQUE

There are four basic methods of printmaking—(1) Lithography, (2) Serigraphy or Silkscreen, (3) Intaglio and (4) Relief. Käthe Kollwitz used three of the four processes. Lithography is a process in which an image is drawn with a grease crayon or pencil on the surface of a specially treated slab of limestone. After a treatment of gum arabic and nitric acid, the stone is dampened with water. The complex process is based on the principle that grease and water do not mix. An "oil based ink" charged roller is passed over the surface. The ink adheres only to the greasy areas. A piece of paper is placed on the inked stone and put through a press to make a print. Intaglio is a process of etching lines

"Expression is all that is important to me and I therefore told myself that the simple line of the lithograph is best suited for that.[16]"

Käthe Kollwitz

into a plate, usually copper. The image is created by the grooves that are incised into the plate and hold the ink. An etching is a type of intaglio printing that is made by drawing with a sharp tool into an acid-resistant substance or ground, usually resin or asphalt, that covers the plate. The drawn lines expose areas of the metal that are then eaten away in an acid bath to produce the incised image. Relief is the process of cutting or carving away the surface of a material such as wood or linoleum. Ink is applied to the top of the surface (the opposite of intaglio) and printed. A wood cut is a type of relief print; the image is cut or carved into a slab of wood.

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[1] Richard and Clare Winston, trans., The Diary and Letters of Kaethe Kollwitz, Hans Kollwitz, ed. (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1955) 18-19.
[2] Elizabeth Prelinger with essays by Alessandra Comini and Hildegard Bachert, Kaethe Kollwitz, (Washington, D.C.: The National Gallery of Art, 1992) 92.
[3] Kathe Kollwitz, trans. Rita and Robert Kimber, ed. Renate Hinz (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981) xvi.
[4] Winston 23.
[5] Winston 24-25.
[6] Winston 38.
[7] Winston 92.
[8] Prelinger 14-16.
[9] Prelinger 94-96.
[10] Carl Zigrosser, ed., Prints and Drawings of Kathe Kollwitz, (New York: Dover Publications, 1951) 9.
[11] Prelinger 26.
[12] Prelinger 42.
[13] Prelinger 59.
[14] Prelinger 181.
[15] Prelinger 81.
[16] Prelinger 54.

Käthe Kollwitz

IMAGE: Detail from Downtrodden, 1900
MEDIUM: Etching and aquatint on paper
LOCATION: The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.
SIZE: 9-3/4"x 12-1/8"

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for aesthetics before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn To:

- examine different theories of art
- discuss various criteria for valuing art
- analyze *Downtrodden* from a variety of philosophical viewpoints
- develop logical arguments based on sound reasoning

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AESTHETIC THEORIES:

The following theories present different viewpoints from which we can consider works of art. They are summarized in the boxes below in language appropriate for your students. Introduce and/or review the theories if necessary.

IMITATIONALISM
Literal Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the realistic presentation of subject matter. A work is successful if it looks like and reminds us of what we see in the real world.

FORMALISM
Visual Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the effective organization of the elements of art through the arrangement of visual principles.

EXPRESSIONISM
Emotional Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the vivid communication of moods, feelings and ideas to the viewer.

INSTRUMENTALISM
Functional Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is that it serves a function that is practical or furthers moral, religious, social or political points of view.

INSTITUTIONALISM
Contextual Classification

The most important thing about a work of art is the context in which it exists and in which it is validated by the artworld.

Theories:

Imitationalism

Formalism

Expressionism

Instrumentalism

Institutionalism

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AESTHETIC QUESTIONS:

Organize your students for a discussion. Work with your entire class or divide students into groups. Discuss one or more of the following aesthetic questions. In addition to a discussion, you may choose to ask students to write their answers to the questions and present them to the class.

1. In the opinion of some critics, Kollwitz was not taken seriously as an artist because she chose printmaking as her medium. The following statement discusses this issue: "The lithographic technique persisted in troubling the artist. On one hand, she felt that the medium was too easy and that she had not truly accomplished something. On the other hand, Kollwitz seems to have feared that too much preoccupation with the means (technique or medium) would compromise the purity of the ends. So in the most nakedly political work, where she sought to arouse emotions and, more important, to exhort to action, she called upon the simplest and quickest means of exercising her brilliant draftsmanship: lithography."[1]

   Is it the role of the artist to provoke political action through their artwork? Why or why not? Should the artist put aesthetic considerations aside to meet political or social agendas? If the artist chooses to do so, is the value of the work compromised? Do you think Kollwitz compromised her work to meet political or social agendas? Why or Why not?

2. Kollwitz was influenced by the ideas, work and medium of Max Klinger. His ideas upheld that printmaking was a reporting, journalistic tool to criticize society's social, political and economic woes, which could be produced for a wide audience. The use of black and white versus full color in works of art is not only discussed in printmaking but also in photography and film. He believed that color beautified a subject, while black and white presented the subject in a more realistic style. That is, when the image is black and white, the viewer does not focus on the color, but on the subject matter and the message. Discuss this issue of color versus no color.

3. Introduce or review each of the five aesthetic theories presented in this unit. Divide your students into five groups and assign a theory to each group. When your students demonstrate their understanding of the concepts, ask the following question:

   Using your assigned aesthetic theory as one point of view for valuing art, how could you argue for or against the value of Kollwitz's work of art?

4. Read your students the following statement from Kollwitz's diary. "In a diary entry of early 1920, the artist discussed her poster to save Vienna's starving children. She wrote, 'While I drew, and wept along with the terrified children I was drawing, I really felt the burden I am bearing. I felt that I have no right to withdraw from the responsibility of being an advocate. It is my duty to voice the sufferings of the people, the sufferings that never end and are as big as mountains. This is my task, but it is not easy to fulfill.'"[2]

   Kollwitz was consumed with her need to advocate for the welfare of the common people. Is this an important role of the artist in society? Is it a special role of art? Why or why not?

[1] Elizabeth Prelinger, Käthe Kollwitz (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) 64.
[2] Prelinger 81.

Käthe Kollwitz

FOR THE TEACHER
ART PRODUCTION GUIDE

"Emotional Imprint"

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art production before beginning this component of the lesson.

TEACHER PREPARATION:

1. Read the "Art Production Guide" and "Student Planning Guide" for Käthe Kollwitz.
2. Duplicate the "Student Planning Guide" and the "Thumbnail Sketches Worksheet".
3. Prepare the necessary art materials and prepare to demonstrate any studio techniques as needed. Practice with the materials before you begin.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS: *glue, mat board, scissors, utility knives, wood blocks, poster board or oak tag, linoleum blocks or found materials printing inks, brayers, bench hooks, carving tools.*

4. Plan your schedule to allow time for your students to research, investigate, explore, create, reflect and assess their work.
5. The criteria for the following art production activity are based on the work of Käthe Kollwitz. The list below is a summary of the characteristics of her work. Use this as a reference for review.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF KOLLWITZ'S WORK:

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- used closely cropped, tightly arranged composition
- simplified, exaggerated and distorted forms
- created contrast and repetition
- used overlapping shapes to create depth
- angular portrayal of faces and figures
- directional light source

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM OF ART:

- used social or political content to communicate universal themes
- created a mood of intense emotion with some symbolism

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- used the printmaking techniques of relief, intaglio, serigraphy (silk-screen) and lithography
- made a series of different prints called a cycle.

ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY:

Ask your students to design and create a print with one or more figures that makes a social or political statement and/or expresses a universal theme.

CRITERIA FOR ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY:

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- create a closely cropped, tightly arranged composition
- use simplified, exaggerated and distorted figures
- create contrast and repetition
- use overlapping of shapes to create depth
- use a directional light source

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM:

- use a social or political idea and/or communicate a universal theme
- use one symbol to represent an important idea

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- use the method of relief printmaking of your choice (wood, linoleum or collograph)
- demonstrate skillful use of media

ART PRODUCTION WITH THE CLASS:

PREPARATION:

1. Review the characteristics of Kollwitz's work.
2. Distribute and introduce the Student Planning Guide. Read it with your students and check for their understanding.
3. Introduce the art production activity and criteria.
4. Introduce or review vocabulary as needed.

PRESENTATION:

Discuss the following ideas with your students before they begin their prints.

1. The gesture of a figure is important because of its ability to convey meaning. The body language expressed through the head, shoulders, arms and overall stature of a figure conveys the feeling an artist is trying to portray. For example, a closed-body position with the arms wrapped around the figure, the head down, hands holding the head or the hands covering the eyes may denote a turning inward or sadness. A open-body position with the arms of the figure wide open, fingers wide open, head up may denote openness, happiness or joy.
2. The body gesture and position of a figure, either open or closed, in relation to other figures in a work is also important. For example, if one figure is seated and one is standing, the standing figure appears to dominate over the seated person. If a figure's back is turned to other figures in the work or to the viewer, the figure may appear to be disinterested or unwilling to communicate. When figures are shown embracing it generally communicates love or friendship. A tightly cropped composition of figures makes them appear larger than life and more personal to the viewer
3. Discuss some possible universal themes for subject matter with your students.

   Examples of "universal emotions" or themes in the human condition are:

- death	- war	- anger
- birth	- inhumanity	- degradation
- marriage	- cruelty	- sorrow
- peace	- faith	- injustice
- love	- separation	- humor
- work	- aging	- play

   Brainstorm on the chalkboard what symbols could represent these ideas—such as, the dove forpeace.

PRODUCTION:

1. Have your students begin working with the Student Planning Guide sections I through V.
2. Introduce and demonstrate media and techniques as needed.

VOCABULARY:

Relief print—
a designed image printed from a plate or block which is inked on the raised surface to produce multiple copies

Collograph—
a type of relief printing using a heavy base, such as mat board or cardboard and gluing even thicknesses of other materials, such as gauze, burlap, string or shapes cut from poster or tag board. The plate is then inked and printed.

Theme—
a subject or topic on which an artist develops a work of art through which he communicates that specific idea

Universal—
all embracing, all reaching, broad in knowledge, interest, ability, emotions; found in all people

Emotion—
a strong generalized feeling or any of various complex reactions found in psychological and physical behavior, such as love, hate, fear, anger

Symbol—
something that stands for another thing; especially an object that represents something abstract—a flag for patriotism or a dove for peace

3. Have your students complete the art production activity.

ASSESSMENT:

1. The Student Planning Guide asks your students to assess their own learning. After they have completed their written evaluations, gather your class for a group discussion. Ask your students to review the criteria and discuss their own work in relation to those criteria. Encourage your students to use their written comments to support their remarks.
2. Use information from your students' written assessments and group discussion to assist you in your final assessment. Your students work and their planning guides provide useful information for portfolio assessment.
3. Exhibit your students' artwork.

Name Date

Käthe Kollwitz

STUDENT PLANNING GUIDE

"Emotional Imprint"

This worksheet is designed to help you develop an idea for your art production. These exercises will help organize your thoughts to create a powerful statement and composition.

Kollwitz's prints often express a theme concerning a social or political issue contemporary to her time. She felt printmaking was an appropriate medium to express the plight of the common people and used the medium in a reporting style. She also favored printmaking because her work could then be duplicated and be made available to the masses at an affordable price.

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I. ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Your challenge is to design and create a print with one or more figures that makes a social or political statement and/or expresses a universal theme.

CRITERIA FOR ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Incorporate the following criteria into your print.

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- create a closely cropped, tightly arranged composition
- use simplified, exaggerated and distorted forms
- create contrast and repetition
- use overlapping shapes to create depth
- use a directional light source

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM:

- use a social or political idea and/or communicate a universal theme
- use one symbol to represent an important idea

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- use the method of relief printmaking of your choice (wood, linoleum or collograph)
- demonstrate skillful use of media

II. RESEARCH/HOMEWORK/JOURNAL

1. Use the resources at your school or local library to research how artists have used printmaking to make social or political statements. Are there common themes among the prints of different artists? Are there images or symbols common throughout these works? Make a list of the symbols you find and what they represent.

2. How has the art of printmaking evolved through history?

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III. BRAINSTORMING/GETTING AN IDEA

What social, political or universal ideas could you use as a subject matter for your print? How can you use one or more figures in a composition to express your idea. List several ideas in the space below.

IV. SELECTION

Select your best idea. Briefly describe your composition and state your intent in the space below.

V. DESIGN/PREPARE SKETCHES

Carefully consider the relationships among the figures in your print. Draw a series of thumbnail sketches using the worksheet.

VI. MATERIALS

Discuss your sketches and the materials you will need to complete your print with your teacher. List the materials you will need below.

VII. PRODUCTION

(Fill out during the production of your work of art.) Complete your print with the materials you have selected. Analyze any problems you experienced and note them below. If you encountered any mistakes, how did you incorporate them into the work?

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VIII. SELF-ASSESSMENT

(Fill out after the completion of you assignment.) The assessment of your work is based on the criteria listed in Section I. Review the criteria before you assess your work.

How effectively does your work meet the criteria?

In your own words, state what it is you have learned by doing this activity.

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BOOKS:

Barron, Stephanie. Degenerate Art: The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany. Exhibition catalogue. Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Los Angeles, 1991.

Bittner, Herbert. Käthe Kollwitz Drawings. New York: 1959.

Dobard, Raymond G. Subject-matter in the Work of Käthe Kollwitz: An Investigation of Death Motifs in Relation to Traditional Iconographic Patterns. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International, 1977.

Fecht, Tom, ed. Käthe Kollwitz, Works in Color. Trans. A. S. Wensinger and R. H. Wood, New York, 1988 (orig. pub. 1987).

*Hinz, Renate. Käthe Kollwitz: Graphics, Posters, Drawings. New York: Pantheon Books, 1981.

Kearns, Martha. Käthe Kollwitz: Woman and Artist. New York: The Feminist Press, 1976.

Klein, Mina C. and H. Arthur Klein. Käthe Kollwitz: Life in Art. New York, 1975.

Klipstein, Dr. August. The Graphic Work of Käthe Kollwitz. New York: Galerie St. Etienne, 1955.

Kollowitz, Hans ed. The Diary and Letters of Kaethe Kollwitz. Trans. Richard and Clara Winston Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1988.

Nagel, Otto. Käthe Kollwitz. Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1971.

*Prelinger, Elizabeth. Käthe Kollwitz. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.

*Zigrosser, Carl. Prints and Drawings of Käthe Kollwitz. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969.

PERIODICALS:

Werner, Alfred. "The Art of Käthe Kollwitz." American Artist Nov. 1963: 24-29, 57-59.

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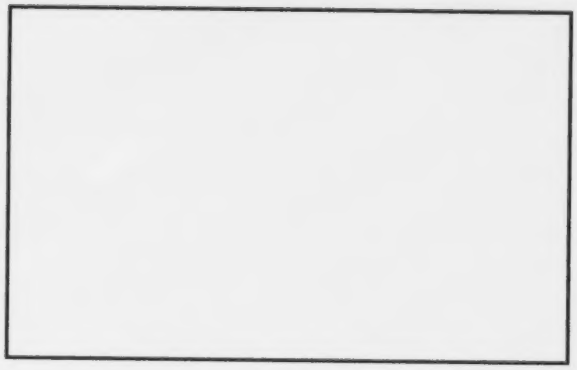
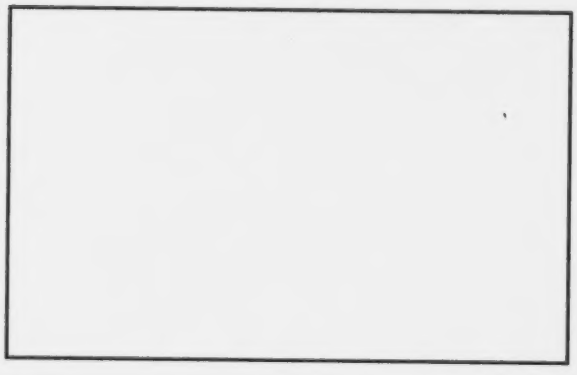
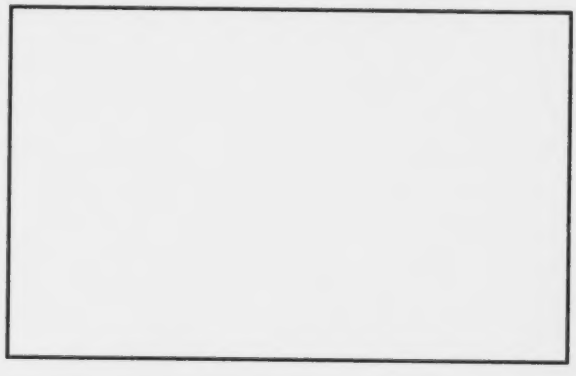
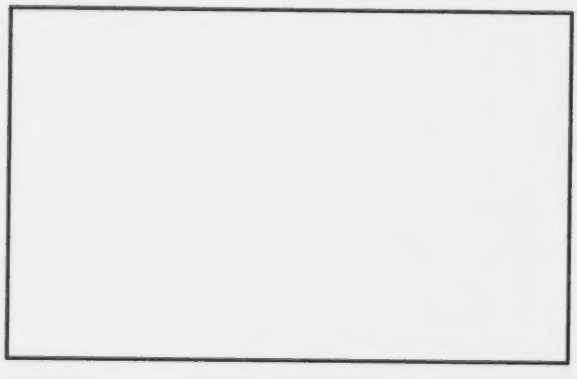
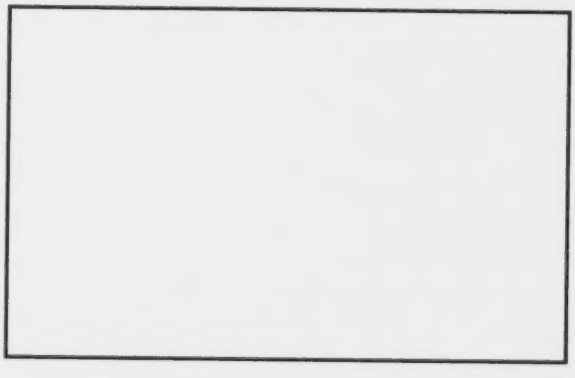
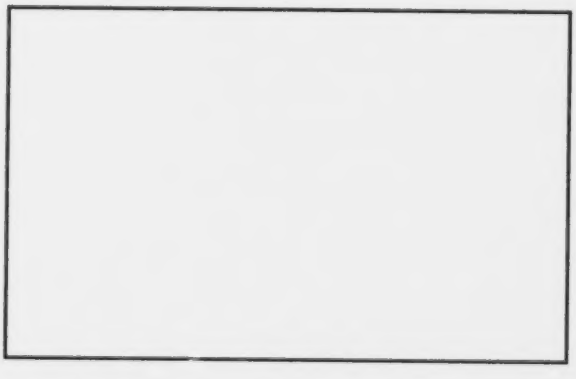
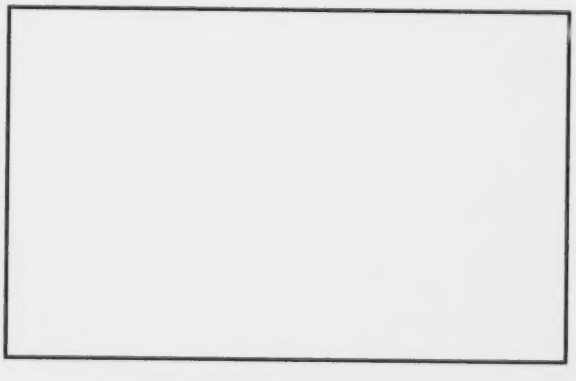
*These books and articles have a wealth of information and are easily accessible to supplement your teaching unit.

Student Worksheet



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Maya Ying Lin

Maya Ying Lin

ART CRITICISM

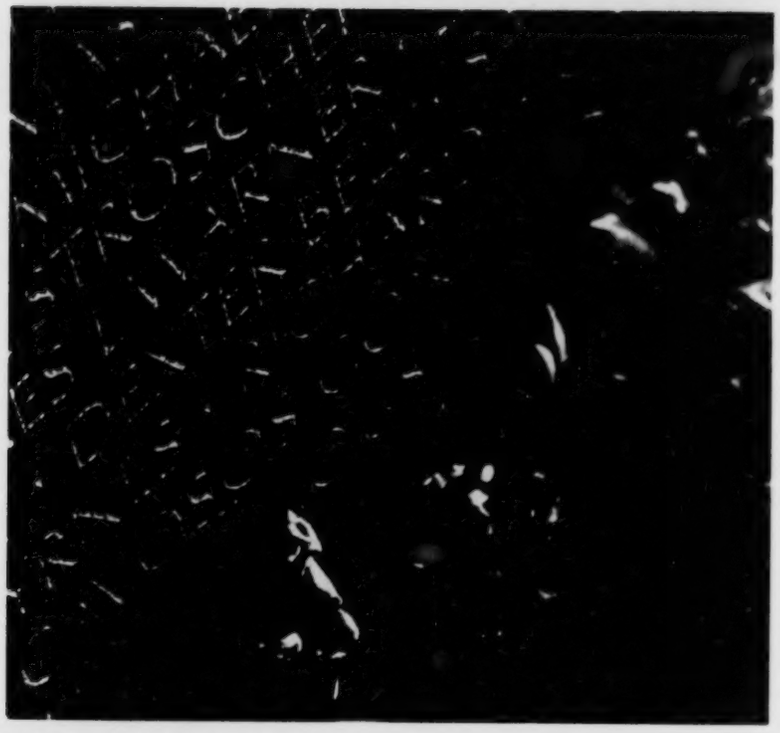

IMAGE: Detail from Vietnam Veterans Memorial, 1982
MEDIUM: Granite Sculpture
LOCATION: National Mall, Constitution Gardens, Washington, D.C.
SIZE: 10' x 150'

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art criticism before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn To:

- describe and analyze the elements of art in works of art
- interpret the meaning of works of art
- make informed judgments about works of art based on various criteria
- recognize and interpret the artist's intent

Organize your class for a discussion about Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Display the art reproduction in a prominent place for viewing. Use the following questions to guide your students in an in-depth discussion. The possible responses that follow each group of questions are included to help support the discussion.

DESCRIPTION:

QUESTIONS

Let's begin our discussion by listing everything we see in the work of art.

How would you describe the structure and shape of the wall?

How long is it?

What materials were used to build it?

How were the names engraved onto the surface of the wall?

In what order are the names listed?

What other details do you notice?

How does the wall relate to the surrounding environment?

Are there any other memorials in the area surrounding the Vietnam Veterans Memorial?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

The memorial is made up of two walls that begin only a couple of inches high at each end and gradually increase in size as the walls ascend to about ten feet to meet at an angle forming a simple wide "V".

Each wall is about 250 feet long and is made out of polished granite with approximately 58,000 engraved names.

The names were engraved in lines of five across by sandblasting them into the granite.

The names begin in the center of the east wall of the monument under the year of the first casualty, and descend in order according to the date of each individual's death or their missing in action.

They proceed in this order down the east wall to its smallest point, and continue again at the lowest end of the west wall.

On the west wall, the names proceed in order and continue towards the center of the monument where, finally, the last name on the memorial meets with the first.

In addition to the individual names, the following inscriptions are engraved in the vertex between the beginning and ending dates:

(Prologue)

IN HONOR OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES WHO SERVED IN THE VIETNAM WAR. THE NAMES OF THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR

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LIVES AND OF THOSE WHO REMAIN MISSING ARE INSCRIBED IN THE ORDER THEY WERE TAKEN FROM US.

(Epilogue)

OUR NATION HONORS THE COURAGE, SACRIFICE AND DEVOTION TO DUTY AND COUNTRY OF ITS VIETNAM VETERANS. THIS MEMORIAL WAS BUILT WITH PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

NOVEMBER 11, 1982

At the lowest point, the wall has only one line of engravings; at the highest point there are 137 lines.

The memorial has 140 numbered panels (70 panels to a side with four panels at the end without names).

On the bottom of each panel is the panel number and either a "W" for west wall, or an "E" for east wall.

The wall is actually set into the earth and has grass growing on the top of it.

The west wall points toward the Lincoln Memorial and the east wall toward the Washington Monument.

ANALYSIS:

QUESTIONS

What color is the wall?

Did the artist use a limited or wide range of values?

How would you describe the letters?

What is the form of the sculpture?

Is there an overall unity in the type? Why?

How was the texture used to create the memorial?

How many textures are there? How would you describe them?

How are the principles of contrast and repetition used?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

The wall is black with dark gray letters.

Only two values of black and gray are used.

The letters are the same formal typeface and are all capitalized.

The letters are considered to be formal because they have serifs on the ends and are the same size.

Functioning as shapes, the letters repeat continuously throughout the work of art.

The form of the memorial is a simple V-Form.

The simple form, the limited use of the materials and the repetition of the letters creates an overall unity.

The two textures are the shiny, polished, highly reflective background and the dull, unpolished letters.

The textures alternate in a simple, uniform pattern.

INTERPRETATION:

QUESTIONS

What does the wall commemorate?

Is this a public or personal memorial or is it both? Why?

What is the effect of the highly reflective surface of the wall?

What is the effect of the declining pathway that runs along the wall?

The wall displays the names of all veterans who either lost their life in the Vietnam War or are still missing. Why do you think the artist included all of these veterans' names? What is the result?

How does this memorial effect the viewer?

What does the memorial say about the effects of war? What thoughts does the wall provoke about the living and the dead?

Does the wall offer solace? Hope? Peace?

What was the artist's intent as expressed through the design of the wall?

What is the most moving or important message of the wall?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

This wall is used to commemorate a time in history, a war.

This wall is not the usual war memorial where one large building or monument stands for all individuals who died in a particular war.

This is a very personal memorial because each individual's name is on it. Relatives, friends and strangers are able to touch the name of each individual.

The highly reflective wall mirrors the living who come to see it. It also reflects the sky and gardens that surround it.

Visitors are able to walk down into the earth where the wall reaches ten feet, read thousands of names, see their reflection, experience other visitors and walk out again.

The continuous listing of names makes you realize just how much death there is in war.

Announce the artist, title and date of the work of art

A confirmation check from outside sources is used to support the interpretation of the work. Present the following confirmation check to your students. Compare the experts' statement with the students' interpretations. Are they similar? Different? Ask your students to respond to the experts' statements.

CONFIRMATION CHECK:

"I had designed the memorial for a seminar of funerary architecture.... We had already been questioning what a war memorial is, its purpose, its responsibility.... I felt a memorial should be honest about the reality of war and be for the people who gave their lives.... I didn't want a static object that people would just look at, but something they could relate to as on a journey, or passage, that would bring each to his own conclusions.... I had an impulse to cut open the earth.... an initial violence that in time would heal.... It was as if the black-brown earth were polished and made into an interface between the sunny world and the quiet dark world beyond, that we can't enter.... The names would become the memorial. There was no need to embellish."[1]

After the confirmation check, continue to Judgment

JUDGMENT:

QUESTIONS

Is the Vietnam Wall a powerful and effective memorial? Why or why not?

What criteria are you using to support your opinion?

Does the memorial accomplish the intent of the artist?

Was her intent consistent with that of other artists who create memorials? Explain your position. Are there any articles that support your position?

What do other people say about the wall? Visitors? Critics?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a very simple yet powerful design.

Its simplicity and position in the earth suggests both violence and healing.

The polished granite and the engraved names commemorate the soldiers who gave their lives for their country.

It makes you realize the monument commemerates real people and is not just a symbol of war.

The size of the memorial is overwhelming and therefore dominates the viewer.

The path in front of the wall allows for an intimate experience with the sculpture by reflecting both life and death back to the viewer. As a result many visitors express their grief openly.

The artist wanted to express the reality of war. Her use of the names of the veterans leaves no doubt of the reality.

Many people visit the memorial. Most people including the critics are very moved by it.

---

[1] Adapted from To Heal a Nation: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, for the National Geographic Society article, "Vietnam Veterans Memorial: America Remembers," May, 1985: 557.

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ART CRITICISM ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #1

1. Ask students to select and research a local memorial in your community.
2. Have the students write a review that presents the merits and intent of the memorial. Newspaper clippings and magazine articles are good sources of information. Students should address how the memorial has or has not impacted their community. Have them take a position and support their opinions with sound reasoning.
3. If possible, publish their reviews in the school or local newspaper

ACTIVITY #2

Ask students to contrast and compare the sculpture of Maya Lin with works of the following artists:

- Frederick Hart
- Alexander Calder
- Marisol
- Claes Oldenburg
- George Segal
- Duane Hanson
- Michaelangelo

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ART HISTORY

Maya Ying Lin

Maya Ying Lin, 1994, Courtesy of Wexner Center for the Arts, Ohio State University

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art history before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn:

- about the artist's life
- how life experiences (social, political, economical) influence the artist
- about the artist's media and technique
- about the artist's intent and the context of the work of art

Maya Lin, artist and architect, was still an undergraduate architectural student at Yale when her design for the proposed Vietnam Veterans Memorial was chosen over 1420 others. Dedicated in 1982, the Memorial has become the second-most-visited site in Washington, D.C.

FAMILY INFLUENCES

Maya Lin was born in Athens, Ohio, in October of 1959 to parents who were artists and scholars. They had left China in 1949, just before the Communist takeover, and eventually immigrated to the United States. Lin's father was a professor of ceramics and Dean of the College of Fine Arts at Ohio University in Athens. Her mother, a poet, taught Asian and English literature for many years.[1]

Although Maya Ying Lin is Chinese, her name is not. In fact, Maya is an Indian word, the name of Buddha's mother. "It means illusion, life is an illusion, everything is emptiness," said Lin's mother. "I chose that name for her because it's beautiful and I'm a little bit of a Buddhist. Also a friend at Smith had that name, a beautiful Indian girl. Maya's middle name, Ying, means jade. Her last name means forest."[2]

Lin was a quiet child who would often read for hours or play chess with her brother. Her favorite books were *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*. Playing alone in her room, Lin enjoyed building little towns or sculptures. She learned silversmithing, so she could make jewelry. Sometimes Lin was able to convince her father to let her throw pots on his potter's wheel.

During high school, Lin took college courses, excelling in math, and graduated as co-valedictorian of her senior class. To make money in the summer, she worked at McDonald's.

"I find it fun to be thinking all the time, figuring things out," she told a Time magazine reporter. "'I guess you could say I was somewhat of a nerd,' she laughs."[3]

THE YALE EXPERIENCE

In 1977, Lin enrolled in the Yale University's School of Architecture, where her diligence and creativity was appreciated.

During her junior year, she studied in Europe, where she became interested in the architecture of cemeteries. While in France, she visited a war memorial commemorating the lives of those who had died in World War I at Somme. Lin was profoundly moved by the memorial. **"It was a great arch, with arch tunnels along two axes, which are inscribed with 73,000 names. It is a geometric abstraction that is sensitive to the surrounding landscape, and which greets visitors like a scream."**[4]

Every day on campus at Yale, Lin also walked past a wall which listed the names of Yale students who had died in United States wars.

THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL COMPETITION

During her senior year at Yale, while Lin was participating in a seminar on funerary architecture, the class read of a competition to create a design for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The entry fee was $20 and open to all United States citizens over the age of 18. The first place award: $20,000. Lin's professor encouraged her to enter.

Looking back, Lin says, **"We had already been questioning what a war memorial is, its purpose, its responsibility. Many earlier war memorials**

were propagandized statements about the victor, the issues, the politics, and not about the people who served and died. I felt a memorial should be honest about the reality of the war and be for the people who gave their lives. From a strong and sobering feeling, it should carry their names. I didn't want a static object that people would just look at, but something they could relate to as on a journey, or passage, that would bring each to his own conclusions. I was mulling these ideas but had no form. Then I went to the site."[5]

On her way back to school from Thanksgiving vacation in Athens, Ohio, Lin was able to visit the site of the memorial in Washington, D.C.

"I walked around this beautiful park, surrounded by trees. People were tossing Frisbees. I wanted to work with the land, not dominate it. I had an impulse to cut open the earth...an initial violence that in time would heal. The grass would grow back, but the cut would remain, a pure, flat surface, like a geode when you cut into it and polish the edge. I didn't visualize heavy physical objects implanted in the earth; instead it was as if the black-brown earth were polished and made into an interface between the sunny world and the quiet, dark world beyond, that we can't enter."[6]

Lin returned to Yale where she sketched her design idea and modeled it in clay. **"It seemed almost too simple. Then I reread the details of the competition requirements: All names of those killed and missing must be a part of the memorial; the design must be apolitical and harmonious with the site. It was perfect. The names would become the memorial. There was no need to embellish."**[7]

Lin's design was critiqued by her professor and the rest of the class. Her professor thought it was too strong but wanted her to enter the competition anyway. On March 31, 1981, the deadline, Lin entered her design. Although she had met the criterion, she did not expect to win.

During the last week of April, the jury committee--seven prominent sculptors and architects--met and were reminded that the memorial "was to make no political statement and it was to promote healing."[8] The 1,421 entries were takgn to an empty hangar at Andrews Air Force Base and hung at eye level, stretching approximately 1.3 miles. Each entry had been given a number, so the artists would be anonymous during the judging. Earlier, Texas billionaire Ross Perot had given $160,000 to underwrite the cost of the competition. The jury took a week to select the winner.

In May, the jurors announced the winner to the Board of Directors of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund: Number 1,026--Maya Lin, a twenty-one-year-old Yale architectural student from Athens, Ohio. Just a few days later, a model of the winning design was shown to the public.

Jan Scruggs, president of the Fund's Board of Directors who had initiated the idea of the memorial, was determined to build it in two years. But the final approval of the memorial design was still needed from Secretary of the Interior, James Watt, The Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission.

The veterans wanted two changes made to Maya Lin's design:

(1) They wanted the names listed in alphabetical order rather than in a chronological listing by date of death.

(2) They asked for an inscription.

"I chose black granite to make the surface reflective and peaceful. The angle was formed solely in relation to the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument to create a unity between the nation's past and present.[20]*"*

Maya Ying Lin

"Maya Lin argued that chronological listing was essential to her design. The wall would read like an epic Greek poem. Vets would find their story told, and their friends remembered, in the panel that corresponded with their tour of duty in Vietnam. Locating specific names with the aid of a directory would be like finding bodies in a battlefield."[9] When the Defense Department listing was examined, there were over 600 Smiths and sixteen men named James Jones. "Alphabetical listing would make the Memorial look like a telephone book engraved in granite, destroying the sense of profound, unique loss that each name carried. They admitted she was right."[10]

As for the veteran's second request, an inscription, Lin was persuaded that a prologue and an epilogue would enhance the chronological listing. In the end, the inscription--strictly apolitical--was a group effort from dozens of people.

Through the summer of 1981, the memorial project was on schedule. Once the design was selected, Maya Lin became design consultant to the architectural firm that was to build the memorial. The firm began to convert the design into detailed construction plans, working through technical problems as they occurred.

THE CONTROVERSY

Then, in October of 1981 a controversy erupted over the memorial design and continued through 1982.[11] A small, powerful group led by Perot, Watt, and a veteran who had lost the design competition spoke out against the design with such comments as:

> "It's something for New York intellectuals."
>
> "It's twenty-first century art."
>
> "It should be representational."
>
> "A black gash of shame."

While this break-away group obstructed the progress of the memorial, the majority of veterans and the public continued raising the $7 million needed. By 1982, the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Fund had reached $8 million. Despite uncertainties, the Fund continued to plan the dedication for November of 1982.

THE COMPROMISE

At the end of January 1982, a compromise was reached between the decision-makers. It was decided that a flag and a figurative sculpture would be added to the memorial. Frederick Hart was chosen to make the sculpture. In mid-March 1982, a construction permit was issued and work on the memorial began. Lin retained a law firm in July 1982 in order to ensure that the monument would be built according to her original design.

However, placement of the sculpture and the flag became the subject of ongoing controversy. In October 1982, *60 Minutes* televised a program, "Lest We Forget," focusing on this controversy. The dedication could not be announced until the flag and statue were in place. In mid-October, all of the involved parties met with the Fine Arts Commission to testify. The Commission went to the site and moved an eight foot styrofoam model of Hart's statue around in front of the wall. Finally, by unanimous vote, the statue was accepted. Yet, approval of

both the flag and statue was granted conditionally, "....with the precise location of each subject to further study....[this] compromise brings the memorial closer to the truth," Maya Lin later wrote. "What is also memorialized is that people still cannot resolve that war, nor can they separate the issues, the politics, from it."[12]

THE DEDICATION

"The five-day National Salute to Vietnam Veterans was held in conjunction with the Veterans Day celebration in November 1982. It included a 56-hour candlelight vigil at the National Cathedral during which all of the names of the dead missing were read; various ceremonies, workshops, receptions, entertainment, unit reunions; a parade; dedication of the Memorial on Saturday, November 13, and concluded with religious services on Sunday at the National Cathedral."[13] More than 150,000 people came to the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. In 1983, the Commission decided to put the flag in an entrance plaza leading to the memorial. In 1984, the Frederick Hart statue was placed in the same area. In 1993, the Vietnam Women's Memorial was unveiled.

THE RESPONSE

The reaction of the people of the United States to this work of art has been personal and intense. The memorial has become the second-most-visited site in Washington, D.C. Every day since Christmas Eve 1982, there has been a vigil tent, kept by veteran volunteers, honoring POWs and MIAs. Many people come to find and touch the name of a special person. Often, visitors will make an impression of an engraved name by covering the engraving with paper and rubbing across it with a pencil. The National Park Service rangers and volunteers help people locate names, provide paper and pencils for the rubbings, and comfort those people who have made their private pilgrimage to The Wall.

Some leave mementos when they visit The Wall, such as medals, poems, flowers, small decorated Christmas trees, books, photographs, rosaries, statues, candles, stuffed animals, and bottles of beer or liquor. In the array of mementos is a reflection of the cultural diversity of our veterans. Native Americans have left medicine bundles, eagle feathers and ears of corn wrapped in deerskin. A Hawaiian veterans group brought a string of orchids that stretched the length of The Wall. These commemorative objects honor the memory of those who have died. Every night, the objects left by the visitors are picked up by a National Park Service ranger who records the object, date, time, and panel number where it was found. These objects are preserved, catalogued, and studied as cultural history at the Museum Archeological and Storage Facility. No flowers are kept, but the ribbons and decorations from wreaths are.[14]

Visiting the memorial is a moving experience. Maya Lin herself recalled, **"The first time I saw the granite panels, the place was frighteningly close to what I thought it should be. It terrified me to have an idea that was solely mine be no longer a part of my mind, but totally public....Later, when I visited, I searched out the name of a friend's father. I touched it and I cried. I was another visitor, and I was reacting to it as I had designed it."**[15]

Since some people are unable to travel to Washington, a veteran decided to build what is called the Moving Wall. There are now two half-scale replicas of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial traveling throughout the

"My professor thought the design was too strong but wanted me to enter anyway. I didn't consider that I might win."[19]

Maya Ying Lin

United States.[16] The Moving Wall is made of polished-black-Formica laminated panels on aluminum frames. Despite the size discrepancy and the use of different materials, viewers' reactions to the replicas are similar to the actual memorial in Washington.

After the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Maya Lin enrolled in Yale University as a graduate student and received a Master's Degree in Architecture in 1986. She went to work for a New York architectural firm and shares and apartment on the Lower East Side with a sculptor. Since the memorial, Lin has been renovating a house in New England, working on her own sculpture, and designing an open-air gathering place as well as a park.

CIVIL RIGHTS MEMORIAL

In 1989, Lin designed and dedicated a Civil Rights Memorial at the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama. In describing the memorial, the Washington Post says, "On the lower level of a two-level plaza will sit a circular stone table, its surface bearing a time line of civil rights movement events and the names of the people who died and were not famous, written in gold letters. Water will flow across the words. Behind a wall of water falling from the upper level, there will be more gold in a quote from Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech:

> 'We will not be satisfied until
> justice rolls down like waters and
> righteousness like a mighty stream'

...Lin hopes it will have the spirit of a Japanese garden, evoking the sacred."[17]

The asymmetrical design is constructed of polished black granite with white granite steps and walkways surrounding the plaza.

GROUNDSWELL

In October 1993, Lin dedicated her sculpture, *Groundswell* at Ohio State University's Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio. In this work, Lin recycled pieces of broken tempered safety glass, sea-green in color, from automobile windshields. The glass was raked into Zen garden mounds, which shimmer in the light, settling and moving with the wind and other elements of the weather. These mounds are on the exterior of the building on three separate levels—below ground, ground level, and upper level—and can only be viewed from the inside of the building at each level.

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES

Maya Lin made pastel drawings of her design concept when she entered the competition. Later a model or maquette of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was constructed. Once the design was chosen, Lin became the design consultant to the architectural firm that built the memorial. The firm began to convert the design into detail construction plans; there were some technical problems to overcome.

In constructing the memorial, one hundred forty concrete pilings were put in place, a concrete foundation was poured, and a retaining wall was built to hold the black granite panels. The granite, which came from

India, was cut and polished in Barre, Vermont, and inscribed in Memphis, Tennessee.

"The names were not carved by hand, but engraved by a computerized typesetting process called photo-stencil gritblasting. Each stone was cleaned, painted with chemicals, and allowed to dry overnight. It was then covered with a photo negative that was an exact stencil of the names in the order in which they would appear on the panel. Then it was exposed to a light, left for a short time, washed and sandblasted. Most of the sandblasting was done by students from a local art school. One woman engraved the name of her brother."[18] Stone cutters chiseled by hand the dates, the prologue and epilogue.

NOTE: Inexpensive books and visuals can be purchased from
The friends of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial
1350 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20036

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[1] Brent Ashabraner, Always to Remember: The Story of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (New York: Scholastic, Inc, 1988) 59.

[2] Phil McCombs, "Maya Lin and The Great Wall of China," The Washington Post 5 Jan. 1982: F1.

[3] Jonathon Coleman, "First She Looks Inward," Time 6 Nov. 1989: 92.

[4] Jan C. Scruggs and Joel L. Swerdlow, To Heal a Nation: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1985 and reissused in 1992 for the 10th anniversary) 77.

[5] Courtesy of the National Geographic Society, May 1985, p. 557.

[6] Courtesy of the National Geographic Society, May 1985, p. 557.

[7] Courtesy of the National Geographic Society, May 1985, p. 557.

[8] Scruggs and Swerdlow 62.

[9] Scruggs and Swerdlow 78.

[10] Scruggs and Swerdlow 79.

[11] For more complete details xerox the article, "A Tale of Two Memorials," Art in America Apr. 1983, Vol. 71: 120-126. This is useful for the aesthetic debate over the works of Maya Lin and Frederick Hart.

[12] Scruggs and Swerdlow 127-133.

[13] Lydia Fish, The Last Firebase: A Guide to Vietnam Veterans Memroial (Shippensburg, Pennsylvania: White Mane Publishing, 1987) 5. This book has additional information about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial as well as an excellent description of Frederick Hart's bronze casting techniques and the public response to his statue.

[14] Fish 22-25.

[15] Courtesy of the National Geographic Society, May 1985, p. 557.

[16] Fish 68-70.

[17] Elizabeth Kastor, "Maya Lin's Unwavering Vision," The Washington Post, 15 Feb. 1989: B6.

[18] Fish 4.

[19] Courtesy of the National Geographic Society, May 1985, p. 557.

[20] Courtesy of the National Geographic Society, May 1985, p. 557.

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AESTHETICS

Maya Ying Lin

IMAGE: Detail from Vietnam Veterans Memorial, 1982
MEDIUM: Granite Sculpture
LOCATION: National Mall, Constitution Gardens, Washington, D.C.
SIZE: 10' x 150'

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for aesthetics before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn To:

- examine different theories of art
- discuss various criteria for valuing art
- analyze the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* from a variety of philosophical viewpoints
- develop logical arguments based on sound reasoning

AESTHETIC THEORIES:

The following theories present different viewpoints from which we can consider works of art. They are summarized in the boxes below in language appropriate for your students. Introduce and/or review the theories if necessary.

IMITATIONALISM
Literal Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the realistic presentation of subject matter. A work is successful if it looks like and reminds us of what we see in the real world.

FORMALISM
Visual Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the effective organization of the elements of art through the arrangement of visual principles.

EXPRESSIONISM
Emotional Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the vivid communication of moods, feelings and ideas to the viewer.

INSTRUMENTALISM
Functional Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is that it serves a function that is practical or furthers moral, religious, social or political points of view.

INSTITUTIONALISM
Contextual Classification

The most important thing about a work of art is the context in which it exists and in which it is validated by the artworld.

Theories:

Imitationalism

Formalism

Expressionism

Instrumentalism

Institutionalism

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AESTHETIC QUESTIONS:

Organize your students for a discussion. Work with your entire class or divide students into groups. Discuss one or more of the following aesthetic questions. In addition to a discussion, you may choose to ask students to write their answers to the questions and present them to the class.

1. Controversy often surrounds artworks created for public spaces such as the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*. After a work of art has been accepted by a committee or community, should the ideas of the artist be protected? Is it appropriate to ask an artist to change their idea to please someone else? What beliefs or values influence the way that people respond to works of art? Explain your answers.

2. Different aesthetic theories suggest different criteria for considering the merits of works of art. Discuss the five theories presented in this lesson. Divide your students into five groups and assign one theory per group. For example, one group of students will discuss the merits of the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* from the viewpoint of the Formalist theory. Another group will speak from the viewpoint of the Instrumentalist theory and so on. Ask your students to discuss the merits of the memorial based on their assigned theory. After their group discussions, have students prepare presentations for the class.

3. Display the reproduction of the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* in a prominent place in the school. Ask students to design and conduct a school survey to collect reactions to the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*. Divide the students into small groups. Have them compile the questions and duplicate the survey, then distribute the survey, collect and analyze the data for an article to submit in the school newspaper.

4. Make copies of the article "A Tale of Two Memorials," from the magazine *Art in America*, April 1993, pp. 120-126, for your students.

   Have students read the article and discuss the merits of the two memorials commissioned to commemorate the Vietnam War. Divide your class into two groups and ask them to prepare a debate to discuss the merits of the sculptures from the two perspectives presented in the article. Ask them to consider why people have various viewpoints and what factors might influence these viewpoints. Invite another class, school administrators or parents to the debate.

5. The statements on the following page by Maya Lin reflect her thoughts concerning the design and construction of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Provide each of your students with a copy, and lead a class discussion focusing on the artist and her remarks. The following are suggested questions for your discussion.
   - What was Maya Lin's reaction to the memorial after it was completed?
   - As an artist what were some of the aesthetic issues Maya Lin had to consider?
   - Did Maya Lin consider the effects her design might have on those who visited the memorial?

- In what ways did her considerations influence her intent in creating the design of the memorial?
- How did Maya Lin consider the environment and its relationship to the memorial?
- Why did she select granite as the material?

Remarks by Maya Lin about the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*

> "The first time I saw the granite panels, the place was frighteningly close to what I thought it should be," recalls designer Maya Lin. "It terrified me to have an idea that was solely mine be no longer a part of my mind, but totally public. I had designed the memorial for a seminar on funerary architecture my senior year at Yale, after our class read about an open competition for the design. We had already been questioning what a war memorial is, its purpose, its responsibility. Many earlier war memorials were propagandized statements about the victor, the issues, the politics, and not about the people who served and died. I felt a memorial should be honest about the reality of war and be for the people who gave their lives. For a strong and sobering feeling, it should carry their names. I didn't want a static object that people would just look at, but something they could relate to as on a journey, or passage, that would bring each to his own conclusions. I was mulling these ideas but I had no form. Then I went to the site.
>
> "I had been home for Thanksgiving in Athens, Ohio, and decided to stop in Washington. I walked around this beautiful park, surrounded by trees. People were tossing a Frisbee. I wanted to work with the land and not dominate it. I had an impulse to cut open the earth....an initial violence that in time would heal. The grass would grow back, but the cut would remain, a pure, flat surface, like a geode when you cut into it and polish the edge. I didn't visualize heavy physical objects implanted in the earth; instead it was as if the black-brown earth were polished and made into an interface between the sunny world and the quiet, dark world beyond, that we can't enter.
>
> "At Yale I sketched the idea and worked it up in clay. It seemed almost too simple. Then I reread details about the competition requirements: All names of those killed and missing must be a part of the memorial; the design must be apolitical and harmonious with the site. It was perfect. The names would become the memorial. There was no need to embellish.
>
> "I chose black granite to make the surface reflective and peaceful. The angle was formed solely in relation to the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument to create a unity between the nation's past and present.
>
> "My professor thought the design was too strong but wanted me to enter anyway. I didn't consider that it might win.
>
> "Later, when I visited, I searched out the name of a friend's father. I touched it and I cried. I was another visitor, and I was reacting to it as I had designed it."

Courtesy of the National Geographic Society, May 1985, p. 557

Maya Ying Lin

FOR THE TEACHER
ART PRODUCTION GUIDE

"A Memorial"

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art production before beginning this component of the lesson.

TEACHER PREPARATION:

1. Read the "Art Production Guide" and "Student Planning Guide" for Maya Lin.
2. Duplicate the "Student Planning Guide" and the "Thumbnail Sketches Worksheet".
3. Prepare the necessary art materials and prepare to demonstrate any studio techniques as needed. Practice with the materials before you begin.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS: *pencils, mat board, scissors, utility knives, construction paper, foam core, glue, markers, rulers and access to different resources for different typeface and fonts.*

4. Plan your schedule to allow time for your students to research, investigate, explore, create, reflect and assess their work.
5. The criteria for the following art production activity are based on the work of Maya Lin. The list below is a summary of the characteristics of her work. Use this list as a reference for review.

CHARACTERISTICS OF LIN'S WORK:

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- used simple shapes and forms
- limited use of color
- created repetition and contrast

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM OF ART:

- expressed universal ideas or emotion
- expressed social meaning through the use of colors, shapes, lines and texture
- choice of site specific important to the meaning of memorial

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- used a traditional medium (granite) and techniques appropriate for the idea
- used structural techniques and architectural drawing skills
- produced a 3-dimensional maquette before the final sculpture
- used model-building skills, cutting, gluing

ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY:

Ask your students to design and build a maquette of a memorial with an appropriate inscription to memorialize an idea, feeling, person, or place.

CRITERIA FOR ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY:

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- use simple, large shapes and forms
- create repetition and contrast
- limited use of color
- use letter shapes appropriate for the inscription

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM:

- memorialize an idea, feeling, person or place
- write an appropriate inscription for the memorial

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- use the media of your choice
- demonstrate skillful use of materials
- demonstrate skillful use of structural techniques

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ART PRODUCTION WITH THE CLASS:

PREPARATION:

1. Review the characteristics of Lin's work.
2. Distribute and introduce the Student Planning Guide. Read it with your students and check for their understanding.
3. Introduce the art production activity and criteria.
4. Introduce or review vocabulary as needed.

PRESENTATION:

1. Discuss the following statements by and about Maya Lin with your students before they begin their maquette. The quotes express her thoughts about her work from two perspectives. Read to your students.
   - Lin is influenced by Eastern philosophy with its "stark simplicity and virtual requirement to 'look inward'." Eastern philosophy describes life and death as part of a continuous circle.
   - "She considers the emotional and psychological context of the place—the people, the background, the history. Then there is the form itself. Tactility, she says suddenly, with such emphasis that it suggests the essence of her perceptions. Immediate sensations of material. Things are minimal in my vocabulary, so that means *everything* counts. Light counts. Sound counts. Height differences count." This contemporary type of art is called Minimalism.

Ask your students questions like:

- How is Lin's work influenced by Eastern philosophy?
- Why is this an important element of her work?
- How does Lin consider the location of her memorials?
- Why is this important?
- What does Lin mean by the tactility of the work?
- What does she mean by minimal?
- How do her perceptions influence her work?

2. Discuss possible ideas for subject matter with your students.
   a. **People Memorial:** John F. Kennedy, Mother Teresa, Eli Whitney, Jacob Lawrence, Martin Luther King, Jr., Jesse Owens, Sojourner Truth, Andy Warhol, Mary Cassatt, Boy Scouts, a person who has died of AIDS, a parent or grandparent
   b. **Pet Memorial:** dog, cat, goldfish, horse, or boa constrictor
   c. **Place Memorial:** Grand Canyon, Gettysburg, the world, the mall, space, or ocean
   d. **Feelings Memorial:** anger, love, sadness, peace, happiness, loneliness, hope

VOCABULARY:

Maquette (ma ket')—
is a small preliminary model

Memorial—
serving to help people remember some person or event, as a statue or monument

Sans serif—
is a style of printing type with no serifs. An example, I

Serifs—
is a style of printing type with serifs, that is, fine lines that cross the top and bottom of a letter. An example, I

Minimalism—
is a style of art that is stripped down to its essentials; a reduction to simple forms that challenge the viewer to notice the relationship of forms and spaces

Symbol—
something that stands for another thing; especially an object that represents something abstract—a flag for patriotism or a dove of peace

3. Present the following information about type faces and how they are used to help convey a message. Discuss with your students the importance of selecting an appropriate type face for their maquette. Illustrate the difference between sans serif and serif type faces.

Formal typeface and font names (serif)	Bookman Caslon Openface Fenice Garamond Book Onyx Wedding Text Zapf Elliptical	H This type of letter form might be used for children's parties, less formal events, beach parties, cookouts, personal events. serif
Informal typeface and font names (sans serif)	Avant Garde Dom Casual Futura Condensed Helvetica Industria INFORMAL 011 Mister Earl	H This type of letter form might be used for more formal documents, such as, birth, marriage, and death certificates, diplomas, awards and engraved invitations to very special occasions.

Discuss how different typefaces can express different moods or ideas. Have your students look through magazines and notice how type is used in advertising to convey meaning. Ask them to match the style of different typefaces to the content of several messages. For example, an Old English typeface would be appropriate for a biblical message, a handwritten note would be appropriate for a graffiti style, different letters cut out of a magazine could be used for a party, and a formal typeface would be appropriate for a traditional announcement. Ask to consider this information as they select the typeface for their inscription.

PRODUCTION:

1. Have your students begin working with the Student Planning Guide sections I through IV.
2. Introduce and demonstrate any media or techniques as needed.
3. Have your students complete the art production activity.

ASSESSMENT:

1. The Student Planning Guide asks your students to assess their own learning. After they have completed their written evaluations, gather your class for a group discussion. Ask your students to review the

criteria and discuss their own work in relation to those criteria. Encourage your students to use their written comments to support their remarks.

2. Use information from your students' written assessments and group discussion to assist you in your final assessment. Your students work and their planning guides provide useful information for portfolio assessment.

3. Exhibit your students' artwork.

Name Date

Maya Ying Lin

STUDENT PLANNING GUIDE

"A Memorial"

This worksheet is designed to help you develop an idea for your art production. These exercises will help organize your thoughts to create a powerful statement and composition.

Maya Lin was a student of architecture when she designed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. When it was completed, Maya Lin herself recalled, "The first time I saw the granite panels, the place was frighteningly close to what I thought it should be. It terrified me to have an idea that was solely mine be no longer a part of my mind, but totally public....Later, when I visited, I searched out the name of a friend's father. I touched it and I cried. I was another visitor, and I was reacting to it as I had designed it."

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I. ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Your challenge is to design and build a maquette of a memorial and to write an appropriate inscription to memorialize an idea, feeling, person or place.

CRITERIA FOR ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Incorporate the following criteria into your maquette.

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- use large, simple shapes and forms
- create repetition and contrast
- limited use of color
- use letter shapes appropriate for the inscription

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM:

- memorialize an idea, feeling, person or place
- write an inscription for the memorial

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- use the media of your choice
- demonstrate skillful use of media
- demonstrate skillful use of structural techniques

II. RESEARCH/HOMEWORK/ART JOURNAL

Use the resources at your school, local library or government center to locate information about memorials in your community. Record the following information in an art journal or on a piece of paper.

1. What memorials are in your community? Who do they memorialize? Who built and paid for the memorials? What were the criteria for selection of the artist, design and setting? If possible, interview the people who were involved in the process.
2. Locate periodicals, books and magazines that feature memorials, both traditional and contemporary.

III. BRAINSTORMING/GETTING AN IDEA

What are some ideas about which you personally feel strong? Make a list of five possible themes or ideas for your memorial.

IV. SELECTION

Select your best idea and write an inscription to go with it. Briefly describe your maquette and state your intent in the space below.

V. DESIGN/PREPARE SKETCHES

Carefully consider the relationships that exist among the form of your maquette, the inscription and the materials you select to create it. Also consider the typeface you would like to use to write your inscription. Discuss these relationships in the space below.

Draw a series of thumbnail sketches using the worksheet. Select one design and sketch different views of your idea from all sides.

VI. MATERIALS

Discuss your sketches and the materials you will need to complete your maquette or model with your teacher. List the materials you will need below.

VII. PRODUCTION

(Fill out during the production of your work of art.) Complete your maquette with the materials you have selected. Analyze any problems you experienced while working and note them below. If you encountered any mistakes, how did you incorporate them into the work?

VIII. SELF-ASSESSMENT

(Fill out after the completion of your assignment.) The assessment of your work is based on the criteria listed in Section I. Review the criteria before you assess your work.

How effectively does your work meet the criteria?

In your own words, state what it is you have learned by doing this activity.

BOOKS:

*Ashabranner, Brent. Always to Remember: The Story of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1988.

Bunting, Eve. The Wall. New York: Clarion Books, 1990.

*Fish, Lydia. The Last Firebase: A Guide to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Shippenburg, Penn.: White Mane Publishing, 1987. This book has additional information about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial as well as an excellent description in the book of Frederick Hart's bronze casting techniques and the public response to his statue.

Lawson, Don. The United States in the Vietnam War. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1981.

Lopes, Sal. The Wall: Images and Offerings from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. New York: Collins Publishers, Inc., 1987.

*Scruggs, Jan C., and Swerdlow, Joel L. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: To Heal A Nation. New York: Harper and Row, 1985. (Reprinted with additions for the 10th Anniversary Edition, 1992).

PERIODICALS:

*"A Tale of Two Memorials." Art in America Apr. 1983: 120-127. This is useful for the aesthetic debate between Maya Lin and Frederick Hart.

Buckley, Christopher. "The Wall." Esquire Sep. 1985: 61-73.

*Coleman, Jonathan. "First She Looks Inward" Time 6 Nov. 1989: 90- 94. This article is about the Civil Rights Memorial.

Gibson, Nancy. "One for Her Home State." Columbus Dispatch 3 June 1993. An article on the installation of "Groundswell."

Kastor, Elizabeth. "Maya Lin's Unwavering Vision." The Washington Post 13 Feb. 1989: B6.

Kelley, Jeff. "Maya Ying Lin, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, The Wall." Art Forum Apr. 1993.

*McCombs, Phil. "Maya Lin and the Great Wall of China." The Washington Post 3 Jan. 1982: F1.

*Swerdlow, Joel L. "To Heal A Nation: Vietnam Veterans Memorial: America Remembers." National Geographic May 1985: 555-575.

"The Legacy of Vietnam." Newsweek: Special Issue. 15 Apr. 1985: 32-71.

PAMPHLET:

Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Official Park Guide. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1986.

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*These books and articles have a wealth of information and are easily accessible to supplement your teaching unit.

Student Worksheet

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Mary Ellen Mark

Mary Ellen Mark

ART CRITICISM

IMAGE: Detail from Gibbs Senior High School Prom, St. Petersburg, Florida, 1986
MEDIUM: Photograph
LOCATION: Mary Ellen Mark Library, New York
SIZE: 16" x 20"

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art criticism before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn To:

- describe and analyze the elements of art in works of art
- interpret the meaning of works of art
- make informed judgments about works of art based on various criteria
- recognize and interpret the artist's intent

Organize your class for a discussion about the photograph titled Gibbs Senior High School Prom by Mary Ellen Mark. Display the art reproduction in a prominent place for viewing. Use the following questions to guide your students in an in-depth discussion. The possible responses that follow each group of questions are included to support the discussion.

DESCRIPTION:

QUESTIONS

Let's begin our discussion by listing everything we see in the work of art.

What is the subject matter?

How many people are in the photograph?

What are they doing?

Where are they?

How are they grouped together?

How are they dressed?

How would you describe the surrounding environment?

In what directions are the figures facing?

What other details in the photograph do you notice? Name them.

What medium was used to create the image?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

Gibbs Senior High School Prom is a black and white photograph of sixteen young people attending a high school prom.

The right half of the photograph pictures a girl and boy dancing close together with their foreheads touching and their eyes closed.

Their clothing is formal.

The girl is wearing a prom dress, pearl earrings and necklace, a ring on her left hand and a corsage on her right wrist.

The boy is wearing a tuxedo.

The remainder of the right side is basically dark except for the face that appears between the heads of the couple, the arm of someone else standing behind the boy and balloons floating near the ceiling.

In the left half of the photo there are three girls standing in the foreground.

One is turned to the right with the back of her head to the camera.

Another girl, who is facing the camera, is dancing and laughing.

The third girl is turned to the left with the back of her head to the camera.

In the middle of the photograph, to the right and behind the three girls, is a dancing couple.

Looking at this couple, you can see the back of the girl's head and part of the boy's face, from the eyes up.

Above this couple, another couple looks like they are walking down a set of stairs. To the top left of the photograph, a group of about six people, all dressed in formal attire, are on what seems to be a balcony with a railing in front of them and two doors with sheared curtains behind them.

Above this group is either a picture or a loud speaker, a vent, circular decorations on the wall and decorations hanging from the ceiling.

ANALYSIS:

QUESTIONS

What values are in the work?

How do the values change throughout the photograph?

Are the values complex or simple? Explain.

Do the values repeat throughout the image?

Do the values create the illusion of depth?

From where does the light appear to be coming?

What different types of shapes make up the subject matter?

Do the shapes repeat? Where?

Do any of the shapes contrast? Which ones?

How is the illusion of depth created?

Are there a few textures or are there many?

Do the textures repeat throughout the photograph? Where?

Do the textures contribute to the contrast? How?

What is the focal point of the image? How is it created?

How do the sizes of the figures impact the focal point or center of interest?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

The photograph is composed of black, white, and various grays.

A wide range of values, from light to dark, and the shapes create a complex composition.

The gradual change in values repeats throughout the photograph.

This change in brightness gives the shapes an appearance of depth.

The strobe light from the camera illuminates the image from the front.

There are human forms which are organic and complex.

The railings, doors and walls are geometric shapes.

The shapes and human forms repeat throughout the photograph.

The geometric rectangles contrast with the rounded edges of the human forms.

The depth cues used are the gradients of size, the gradients of brightness and overlapping of the shapes and forms.

There are many textures throughout the photograph such as hair, different fabrics and skin.

There textures repeat and contrast with each other (silky, satin and soft skin contrast with smooth hard walls, steps and railings).

On the right of the photo, the dancing couple is larger in size and brighter in value than other figures. Generally, the artist uses size to indicate to the viewer that something is important and to direct their attention to it.

INTERPRETATION:

QUESTIONS

What is the young couple doing?

Do they seem to notice anyone around them?

Could they be in love? Why do you think so?

What is happening around the couple?

Do the other people seem to be having fun? How do you know?

What idea do you think the artist intended to express with the photograph?

Why do you think the artist used black and white film instead of color for this photograph?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

The couple on the right seems to be slow dancing to a fast song, not caring about the other people around them.

Their eyes are closed, their foreheads are touching and their hands entwined.

This couple represents first love and innocence.

The two girls to the left are dancing with one another and their gestures suggest that they are having fun. A third girl is talking.

Everyone in the background seems to be dancing except for the group on the balcony who appear to be talking and watching the dancers.

Everyone seems to be having a good time.

The photograph captures a special night in the life of the teenagers--a moment frozen in time forever.

The photograph is about a tradition celebrated in most North American schools.

Announce the artist, title and date of the work of art

A confirmation check from outside sources is used to support the interpretation of the work. Present the following confirmation check to

your students. Compare the experts' statements with your students' interpretations. Are they similar? Different? Ask your students to respond to the experts' statements.

CONFIRMATION CHECK:

While photographing her assignment for the 272 page book entitled, *A Day in the Life of America*, featuring ordinary people doing ordinary things across the country on a single day, on May 2, 1986, "Ms. Mark said she stumbled onto the high school prom....she had gone to the Don Cesar Beach Resort Hotel for a drink at the end of the day. When she found out there was a prom at the hotel,... she got her camera out of the car. 'That's your real America,' Ms. Mark said. 'The senior prom'." She photographed Brooke McPhail and Billy Walker at the prom. "Billy said the photographer took the picture just as a slow song was ending and a fast one was starting. That, he said, explains why dancers in the background aren't quite in step with him and his girlfriend."[1]

In an article in the St. Petersburg Times, Wendy Weyen wrote, "This was the idealistic dream of a young couple in love at a Senior Prom."[2]

After the confirmation check, continue to Judgment

JUDGMENT:

QUESTIONS

Do you consider this a good photograph? Why or why not?

Does the photograph successfully achieve the artist's intent?

What criteria would you use to make a judgment about the success of this work? What qualities of the work contribute to its success?

Does the emotional and/or expressive content of the work contribute to its success? Explain your answer.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

This is a great photograph because it captures a very special moment and preserves it for everyone to enjoy.

It successfully achieves the artist's intent.

This special moment symbolizes special moments in the lives of ordinary people.

The photograph has many values and many textures.

The composition captures a spontaneous moment and has a center of interest.

The quality of the print is evidence of professional technical skill.

The photograph expresses the happiness of young love, an emotion cherished by most people.

This photograph is for all people to enjoy, not just a few special people. Older people may enjoy this photograph because it expresses fond memories of their prom.

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[1] Charlotte Kobberger (at the Mary Ellen Mark Library), letter to the author, 8 Jul '95.

[2] Wendy Weyen, "Teen's Private Moment is Now Public Photograph," St. Petersburg Times 22 Oct. 1986: 4B.

ART CRITICISM ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #1

1. Ask students to bring to class a photograph from home that depicts a social event.
2. Divide your class into groups consisting of two students each. Ask each pair of students to talk about their photograph with their partner, reminding them to discuss the people, the place where the photograph was taken and any important information about the event itself.
3. Next, have your students exchange their photographs and write a review about the image provided by their partner. Have them use the processes of description, analysis, interpretation and judgment. Encourage them to add important historical and contextual information as well.
4. After students have read and discussed their review with their partner and/or the class as a whole, display the photographs and their reviews.

ACTIVITY #2

Ask students to contrast and compare the photography of Mary Ellen Mark with works of the following artists:

- Margaret Bourke-White
- Eugene Smith
- Diane Arbus
- Alice Neel
- Käthe Kollwitz
- David Hockney
- Duane Michaels

ART HISTORY

Mary Ellen Mark

Mary Ellen Mark, Courtesy of Mary Ellen Mark Library

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art history before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn:

- about the artist's life
- how life experiences (social, political, economical) influence the artist
- about the artist's media and technique
- about the artist's intent and the context of the work of art

My ultimate aim is to be an excellent photographer. The more that I learn about photography, the more I realize how many years of hard work that it takes. I am totally committed to photography and willing to devote my life to it.

Mary Ellen Mark

EARLY INFLUENCES

Mary Ellen Mark was born on March 20, 1940 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. As a teenager, Mark attended Cheltenham High School in one of the suburbs of Philadelphia. Along with her involvement in fine arts, Mark was also active in sports and cheerleading. During her senior year, she became the head of the cheerleading squad.[1]

EDUCATION

In 1962, Mark graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting and art history, but felt too isolated as a painter. As a result, Mark entered graduate school, on scholarship, at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications and majored in photography. **"The very first time I held that camera in my hands, I knew I'd found what I wanted to be. Instantly."**[2] Mary Ellen Mark's first published photographs appeared in her university's alumni magazine while she was still a graduate student.[3]

After graduating in 1964, Mark continued to use the university's darkroom facilities for her free-lance work in Philadelphia. That same year, she traveled to Europe and Mexico to prepare a portfolio.[4] In 1965, she applied for and received a Fulbright scholarship to photograph in Turkey.

NEW YORK PHOTOGRAPHS

In the late spring of 1966, Mark moved to New York. With her photographs from Europe she began working as a free-lance photographer for several magazines including *Look*, *Ms.*, and the Catholic magazine *Jubilee*. At the same time, Mark worked on her own special projects. First, she began photographing the city of New York, capturing subjects ranging from Central Park to body builders to political demonstrators. During the late sixties, the city swelled with demonstrations and protests. The abundance of such gatherings offered Mark great opportunities to capture, on film, the energy and intensity of New York.

To generate other ideas, Mark read the newspapers and clipped articles that she felt would make good documentary photographic essays. Then, she shot the photographs and sold the images to an interested magazine. She still works this way today.[5] By doing so, Mark is able to save enough money each year to take several months off to work on her own special projects.[6]

"I photograph people in difficult social situations—people who have difficult lives...They have a story to be told. I want to tell it, I want to be a voice for the unfamous people....I photograph people who are the victims of society, because I care about them. And I want the people who see my pictures to also care."[15]

Mary Ellen Mark

MOTION PICTURE STILLS

In 1967, Mark was hired by United Artists as a special still photographer for the film set of *Alice's Restaurant*. She enjoyed working on the set as it allowed her the unique opportunity to combine aspects of both portraiture and reportage. The work also offered the advantage of better pay than the magazine work she had been doing.[7] Although the movie work was more commercial than Mark's other work, it also allowed her to develop a distinctively documentary style of photography. Over the years, Mark shot stills for such films as *Catch 22* (1970), *Tropic of Cancer* (1970), *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975), *Apocalypse Now* (1979) and *Silkwood* (1983). Photographing on movie sets

provided great exposure for Mark and helped to create more assignment opportunities in the magazine industry as well.

Mark was given a major opportunity in 1968, when she received an assignment by *Look* to do a series on the Italian filmmaker, Federico Felleni, who was making the movie *Satyricon*. While photographing Felleni, Mark heard of an innovative methadone program in London for heroin addicts. Mark became interested in pursuing a story on the program and approached *Look* magazine about the idea. Once they gave her the assignment, Mark traveled to London to shoot the story, which appeared the following year. Mark was careful about capturing her subjects at just the right moment. "She wanted natural light to capture the mood of the room. She looked around and decided to make sure the light would silhouette a particular moment. She waited; as a man came in to help a girl shoot up...She wanted an atmosphere that was chillingly real and natural; at the same time it was depressingly hopeless."[8] These powerful photographs resulted in overwhelming success when they appeared in a photo essay in the April 9, 1970 issue of *Look* magazine.

OREGON STATE MENTAL HOSPITAL

While shooting stills for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* in 1974, Mark was able to make contact with the authorities at the Oregon State Mental Hospital. She had always been interested in photographing a mental institution, and this project provided the opportunity for her to work closely with the people at the hospital. In 1976, Mark arranged, with the director of the Oregon State Hospital, for herself and a journalist to live in the women's ward for approximately six weeks. The photographic work she did during her stay resulted in a number of exhibitions and a book entitled *Ward 81* (1979). **"Great photographers know what their subjects are. In other words, they know what moves them deeply, what continues to concern them...For all, photography is an ongoing conversation with the world and with themselves."**[9] Art critic, Robert Hughes stated that "what resulted was, in fact, a lamentation: one of the most delicately shaded studies of vulnerability ever set on film...the general character of the photographs is to convey sympathy with these trapped lives ."[10]

"For years I'd planned to go live in a mental hospital...I wanted to see if I could feel something of what it was like to be set aside from society....I think I was interested because my father had several nervous breakdowns and was hospitalized several times...But beyond that, in third grade we took a class trip to a mental hospital. I never forgot that. It was fascinating to me. Had I ever had a scientific mind I would have loved being a psychiatrist."[11]

RECENT WORK

Since 1977, Mark has continued to do both her special projects and assignments for leading magazines such as *Vogue*, *Live*, *G.Q.*, and *Rolling Stone*. Occasionally, she does more commercial work such as advertising and film posters. For her commercial assignments, Mark works with an agency called "Art & Commerce". Her magazine assignments have ranged from spending a week with a homeless family, covering floods and photographing portraits of famous actors, such as Jeff Bridges and

"There are themes that are visually interesting to me. I don't want to do the kind of photo essay anymore that isn't going to bring me images that add to my work as a whole. That's always something I have in the back of my mind; I've always tried to do that, and now even more so. I want to make the magazine work I do, the documentary work I do, add up to something. At the end of my life I want to look back at what I've done and say, 'This hasn't been for nothing.'"[14]

Mary Ellen Mark

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Liam Neeson. Mark has also worked with her husband, filmmaker Martin-Bell, as producer of some of his films: *Streetwise* and most recently, *American Heart*.

PHOTOGRAPHY BOOKS

Over the years, Mary Ellen Mark has produced six books of her own photography through which she deftly explores a variety of ideas and themes. They include:

Passport, Lustrum Press, 1974, documents her travels through Europe, Turkey, Asia and America, and includes a photo essay on the Women's Army Corps.

Ward 81, Simon & Schuster, 1979, portrays women residing in Oregon Mental Hospital.

Falkland Road: Prostitutes of Bombay, Alfred Knopf, 1981, records startling images of prostitutes, pimps, transvestites and the brothels in India.

Mother Teresa's Missions of Charity in Calcutta, The Friends of Photography, Untitled 39, 1985, documents the work of nuns and volunteers who care for the terminally ill of Calcutta.

Streetwise, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988, records images of run-away children between the ages of eleven and seventeen who live on the streets of Seattle.

Indian Circus, Japan Independent Communications Corporation, 1993, includes photographs of the performers and animals of sixteen circuses from different areas of India.

Other books about Mary Ellen Mark and her work include:

Mary Ellen Mark: 25 Years, by Marianne Fulton, Bulfinch Press, 1992, which is a 25 year retrospective of her work.

Photo Essay, Photographs by Mary Ellen Mark, Smithsonian Series, 1990.

In every project, Mark chooses to make her photographs work to become "solely about a group of people and their way of life."[12] She captures the images and spirit of ordinary people struggling with various aspects of life. She connects with people who are on the fringe of society just existing; she empathizes with them.

In 1976, Mark joined the photographic agency Magnum, which is based in New York and Paris. Magnum is a prestigious agency that works with a limited number of photographers. Later, five of the photographers associated with the agency, including Mary Ellen Mark, left to establish their own agency, Archive Pictures. In 1988, Mark, along with her husband, established the Mary Ellen Mark Library and their own business, Falkland Road, Inc. In 1989, Mark received a grant from the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House and the Professional Photography Division at Eastman Kodak for two three month trips to India to photograph the sixteen circuses which appear in her book *Indian Circus*. This trip culminated in a traveling retrospective exhibition of her work and a catalogue/book (1991).[13]

Today, Mary Ellen Mark continues to actively pursue the passion she discovered over twenty years ago. Her riveting photography persists in

"You are who you are, and it's important to recognize that and to explore those obsessions, rather than think 'I have to do something different.' There are several themes that I always come back to, and I hope to continue to explore them again and again."[16]

Mary Ellen Mark

capturing the true essence and life of those places and people which are the subjects of her work.

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES

Photography is made of two Greek words: **phos** and **graphein** meaning, literally, **light-writing**. Light is the medium by which photography works; without it, there would be no images on paper or film. When light passes through a lens and is focused on film or paper, it strikes the emulsion of silver halides in the film/paper and an image is recorded (black and white photography). Then, this image is developed and fixed into a negative (only metallic silver is left). The negative is placed in an enlarger where light passes through it. The silver in the negative acts to block the light from exposing the silver halides in the photographic paper. Where there is no silver in the negative, the light is allowed to pass through and expose the photographic paper. This is how a positive image of the photograph is enlarged and reproduced. Next, the photograph is developed and fixed so that the image can no longer be affected by light. As a result, the image is visible to the viewer as it was to the photographer when the photograph was taken.

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[1] Bob Spitz. "Double Exposure." Mirabella 1992: 28-31.
[2] Adrianne Marcus. The Photojournalist: Mary Ellen Mark and Annie Leibovitz (Masters of Photography Contemporary Series). (Los Angeles, Calif.: Peterson Publishing, 1974) 14.
[3] Marianne Fulton. Mary Ellen Mark: 25 Years (Boston, Mass.: Bullfinch Press, Little Brown and Company, 1991). A catalogue for the current retrospective exhibition of her work traveling nationally.
[4] International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, Rochester, New York, file on Mary Ellen Mark, 1968.
[5] Fulton 8-9.
[6] International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House.
[7] Fulton 9.
[8] Marcus 81.
[9] Fulton 11.
[10] Robert Hughes. "Pictures at an Institution." Time 23 Jan. 1978: 91.
[11] Vicki Goldberg. "The Unflinching Eye." The New York Times Magazine: 57.
[12] Fulton 50.
[13] Fulton 50.
[14] Constance Sullivan, Ed. The Photo Essay: Photographs by Mary Ellen Mark. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1990) 6.
[15] Sullivan 15.
[16] Sullivan 16.
[17] Sullivan 16.

"I want to do only documentary work that is important to me. Commercial work can help support my personal work, and so I'll accept most reasonable commercial assignments. But I want my documentary work to always be something special, something that I love."[17]

Mary Ellen Mark

Mary Ellen Mark

IMAGE: Detail from Gibbs Senior High School Prom, St. Petersburg, Florida, 1986
MEDIUM: Photograph
LOCATION: Mary Ellen Mark Library, New York
SIZE: 16" x 20"

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for aesthetics before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn To:

- examine different theories of art
- discuss various criteria for valuing art
- analyze *Gibbs Senior High School Prom* from a variety of philosophical viewpoints
- develop logical arguments based on sound reasoning

AESTHETIC THEORIES:

The following theories present different viewpoints from which we can consider works of art. They are summarized in the boxes below in language appropriate for your students. Introduce and/or review the theories if necessary.

IMITATIONALISM
Literal Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the realistic presentation of subject matter. A work is successful if it looks like and reminds us of what we see in the real world.

FORMALISM
Visual Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the effective organization of the elements of art through the arrangement of visual principles.

EXPRESSIONISM
Emotional Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the vivid communication of moods, feelings and ideas to the viewer.

INSTRUMENTALISM
Functional Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is that it serves a function that is practical or furthers moral, religious, social or political points of view.

INSTITUTIONALISM
Contextual Classification

The most important thing about a work of art is the context in which it exists and in which it is validated by the artworld.

Theories:

Imitationalism

Formalism

Expressionism

Instrumentalism

Institutionalism

AESTHETIC QUESTIONS:

Organize your students for a discussion. Work with your entire class or divide students into groups. Discuss one or more of the following aesthetic questions. In addition to a discussion, you may choose to ask students to write their answers to the questions and present them to the class.

1. Some people believe that it does not require artistic skill to produce a photograph with a camera because it is a mechanical device. Do you consider photography a legitimate form of fine art? If so, what criteria do you use to support your opinion?

2. Read the following quote to your students and discuss the aesthetic issues it presents:

   > "Mark....prefers to work with someone whose printing she admires and in whom she has complete confidence. She gave up doing any darkroom work herself early on because, like many magazine photographers, she realized that time spent in the darkroom is time taken away from photographing....Mark concerns herself primarily with the original idea and the moment of realizing it on film. She does not want or expect the image on the negative to be modified in printing."[1]

   What do you think about Mark's approach to her work? If technical skill is an important criteria in the valuing of photography, does the fact that someone else prints the work lessen its value? Why or why not? If technical skill is not important, what qualities make a photograph art?

3. Does the fact that a photograph which can be reproduced many times lessen its value as an art form? Why or why not? Does society benefit from art forms like photography? Why or why not? Should the average person be able to own art or should it only be available to institutions like museums or a selected few who have studied art?

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[1] Marianne Fulton, Mary Ellen Mark: 25 Years (Boston, Massachussetts: Bulfinch Press Books, 1991) 14.

Mary Ellen Mark

FOR THE TEACHER
ART PRODUCTION GUIDE

"A Snapshot From Life"

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art production before beginning this component of the lesson.

TEACHER PREPARATION:

1. Read the "Art Production Guide" and "Student Planning Guide" for Mary Ellen Mark.
2. Duplicate the "Student Planning Guide" and the "Thumbnail Sketches Worksheet".
3. Prepare the necessary art materials and prepare to demonstrate any studio techniques as needed. Practice with the materials before you begin.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS: Instamatic cameras, Polaroid or inexpensive throwaway or plastic $3-$5 cameras, film (black and white or color), a photo shop for processing film, rubber cement or dry mount tissue and mat or poster board

4. Plan your schedule to allow time for your students to research, investigate, explore, create, reflect and assess their work.
5. The criteria for the following art production activity are based on the work of Mary Ellen Mark. The list below is a summary of the characteristics of her work. Use this list as a reference for review.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MARK'S WORK:

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- used values, shapes, lines and apparent texture to create depth

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM:

- expressed an idea or feeling in a photo essay
- expressed a concern for less fortunate people in society
- recorded and captured the spontaneity of the moment

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- knowledge of the photographic processes developing and printing

ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY:

Have your students create a photo montage with text, using six or more photographs that portrays the day in the life of a person they know.

CRITERIA FOR ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY:

Have your students incorporate the following criteria in their photo montage. These criteria will provide the structure upon which you can base your assessment of their learning.

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- use values, shapes, lines and apparent texture to create depth

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM:

- use someone you know as your subject matter
- record and capture the spontaneity of your subject

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- use black and white film
- demonstrate skillful use of media

ART PRODUCTION WITH THE CLASS:

PREPARATION:

1. Review the characteristics of Mark's work.
2. Distribute and introduce the Student Planning Guide. Read it with your students and check for their understanding.
3. Introduce the art production activity and criteria.
4. Introduce or review the vocabulary as needed.

PRESENTATION:

Discuss the following ideas with your students before they begin their photo montages.

1. Mary Ellen Mark is considered one of the best photojournalists of her time. Many of Mary Ellen Mark's subjects—children with autism, famine, refugees, homeless teenagers, hospices for the dying, the elderly, civil unrest and camps for children with terminal cancer—are deeply rooted in social issues. When she finds a special project that appeals to her, she often writes a proposal to a publication seeking support to produce a series of photographs. Her intensive preparation and commitment to produce these photographs includes often living at a location and observing her subjects for long periods of time and studying the action, light and angle she will eventually use to capture her images on film. After filming, she records her feelings about every photograph in a journal. Ask students to discuss how they might use similar techniques to complete their photo montage.
2. Discuss the following statement by Mark with your students.

   "Mark's work, however, keeps the traditional faith that pictures convey information and that art is most useful when it serves to communicate....A good picture, she says 'shouldn't need an explanation, emotionally at least. It says something directly to you...What you look for in a picture is a metaphor, something that means something more, that makes you think about things you've seen or thought about.'....'What you look for is a symbol of something in everyone's life'."

Ask your students questions like:

- What does it mean to communicate directly with a viewer?
- What is a metaphor? How can a metaphor be used in a photograph?
- What is a symbol? What are some examples of symbols that could represent something in everyone's life?

3. Discuss possible ideas for subject matter with your students, such as, their mother, father, sister, brother, neighbor, best friend, a person who has influenced them (teacher, coach), or a person who makes something, like pizza or donuts, for a living.
4. Study different photo essay layouts and captions in magazines and newspapers.

VOCABULARY:

Photography—
is made of two Greek words phos and graphein meaning light-writing. Light is the medium by which photography works; without it, there would be no images on paper or film.

Photo Essay—
an analytic, interpretative or critical photographic layout, usually shorter than a news article and less formal; visually dealing with a subject from a limited often a personal point of view.

Photojournalism—
journalism in which written copy is subordinate to pictures; a photographic presentation of news stories or in which a high proportion of photographs are used.

Captions—
the explanatory comment or designation accompanying a pictorial illustration.

Collage—
a composition made of various types of papers glued on a paper, canvas or wood

Montage—
a composite picture made by combining several photographs glued together. Example: David Hockney's photographs.

Symbol—
something that stands for another thing; especially an object that represents something abstract—a flag for patriotism or a dove for peace

PRODUCTION:

1. Have your students begin working with the Student Planning Guide sections I through V.
2. Introduce and demonstrate media or techniques as needed.
3. Have your students complete the art production activity.

ASSESSMENT:

1. The Student Planning Guide asks your students to assess their own learning. After they have completed their written evaluations, gather your class for a group discussion. Ask your students to review the criteria and discuss their own work in relation to those criteria. Encourage your students to use their written comments to support their remarks.
2. Use information from your students' written assessments and group discussion to assist you in your final assessment. Your students work and their planning guides will provide useful information for portfolio assessment.
3. Exhibit your students' artwork.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS FOR THIS UNIT:

1. Collage/Assemblage: Have your students arrange a more personal assemblage or collage with momentos, such as cloth, flowers or ticket stubs, and photographs from a person's life.
2. A Photo Essay on a Social Concern: Ask your students to read various newspapers and magazines for ideas concerning social issues (pollution, environment, endangered species, elderly, drug abuse, illness, poverty, racism, violence). Have them save two or three stories that interest them and paste them in their art journal.
3. A Photo Essay/Collage on an Emotion: Ask your students to create a photographic essay that expresses a specific emotion such as love, happiness, loneliness, joy, anger, fear, disgust, depression, anxiety, fulfillment or humor.
4. Once a Month: Have your students choose a special place indoors or outdoors to observe and photograph. Ask them to make notes in their art journal and to record exactly the location of their observation. Next, have your students return to the same spot and take one photograph a month (day, week) during the semester. Develop the film. Discuss the images and how they visually record the changes that occurred over that period of time. Ask students to create a photomontage with a written account of why this location was special.
5. Do You Really See?: Ask your students to select an object to photograph. Have them photograph the complete object and its parts that make up the whole. Next, ask them to use their photographs with other media such as color pencils, paint, craypas or markers to create a composition.
6. Portraits: Have students take a series of photographs of one person. Ask them to capture different aspects of their subject's personality.
7. A Universal Theme about People: Ask your students to collect a series of black and white photographs or magazine images that illustrate a universal theme about people. Have them arrange their pictures on the six sides of a three-dimensional cube made from poster board, so the viewer has to turn it for the total visual statement.

Name Date

Mary Ellen Mark

STUDENT PLANNING GUIDE

"A Snapshot from Life"

This worksheet is designed to help you develop an idea for your art production. These exercises will help organize your thoughts to create a powerful statement and composition.

Mary Ellen Mark is considered by many to be the best photojournalist of our times. As a photographer, she portrays her subjects involved in the events of daily life and expresses their emotional state. As you work, keep her words in mind: "What you look for is a symbol of something in everyone's life."

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I. ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Your challenge is to create a photo montage with text, using six or more photographs, that portrays a day in the life of a person you know.

CRITERIA FOR ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Incorporate the following criteria into your photo montage.

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- use values, shapes, lines and apparent texture to create depth

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM:

- use someone you know as your subject matter
- record and capture the spontaneity of your subject

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- use black and white film
- demonstrate skillful use of media

II. RESEARCH/HOMEWORK/ART JOURNAL

Use the resources in your school or local library to research how photographers use their medium to communicate effectively.

1. Analyze several photo essay layouts in magazines or newspapers. Sketch each layout on a piece of paper. Notice the composition of the photographs. Are there similarities among them? Are the photographs personal? Do they record and report? Do they express emotion? What was the intent of the essay? Who is the intended audience? Did the photographer achieve her/his intent?
2. Observe an individual in 15-minute intervals throughout the course of a day. Record their actions in your art journal.
3. Look for a variety of photographs of yourself that were taken at different ages (baby, toddler, childhood, teenager.) Select four to six of these photos and analyze their compositions. Are you in the middle of the frame? Is there a lot of space around you in proportion to the space you occupy in the photograph? What is in the background? Does an object seem to be growing out of your head? Where is the light coming from? Is the light too bright? Does it wash out all of the details and texture? Could you take a better photograph? How?
4. Select two advertisements from a magazine that have used photography to promote a product. Choose one color photograph and one black and white photograph. Carefully analyze the two advertisements and answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper. What feelings or emotions does the advertisement subtly or boldly convey through the photograph? Are any symbols or metaphors used? How? Why do you think black and white photography was chosen instead of color? Does it appear to be truthful or factual? Why do you think color photography, instead of black and white, was chosen for the second advertisement? Is it more attractive or dramatic? Does the color advertisement capture and hold your attention better than black and white? If so, why? What are the intentions of the two advertisements? In your opinion, are they successful? Why or why not? Are the advertisements socially responsible? How?

III. BRAINSTORMING/GETTING AN IDEA

Make a list of at least five possible people and ideas you could use for your photo montage.

IV. SELECTION

Select one person you would like to photograph. List five images you would like to photograph for your montage. Briefly describe your idea and state your intent in the space below.

V. DESIGN/PREPARE SKETCHES

Shoot a roll of film of the person you have chosen as your subject. Have your film developed.

VI. MATERIALS

Discuss the materials you will need to complete your photo montage with your teacher. List the materials you will need below.

VII. PRODUCTION

(Fill out during the production of your work of art.) Complete your photo montage with the materials you have selected. Analyze any problems you experienced while working and note them below. If you encountered any mistakes, how did you incorporate them into your work?

VIII. SELF-ASSESSMENT

(Fill out after the completion of your assignment). The assessment of your work is based on the criteria listed in Section I. Review the criteria before you assess your work.

How effectively does your work meet the criteria?

In your own words, state what it is your have learned by doing this activity.

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Mary Ellen Mark

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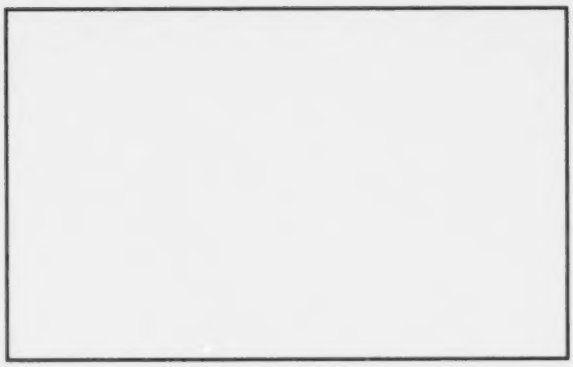
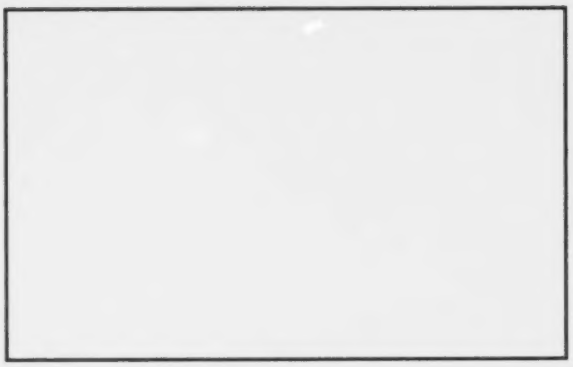
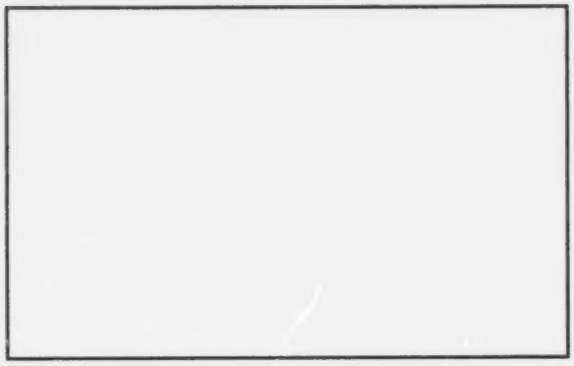
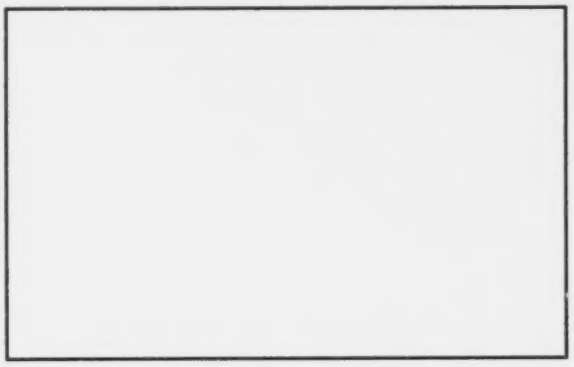
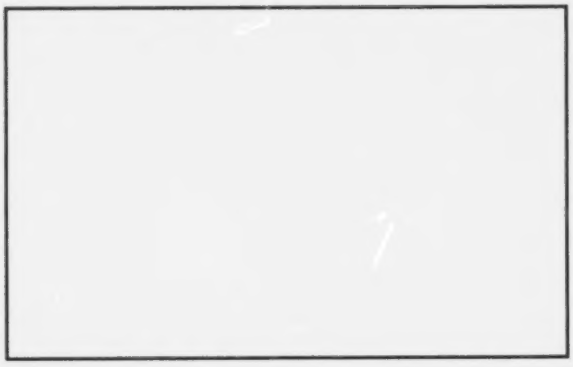
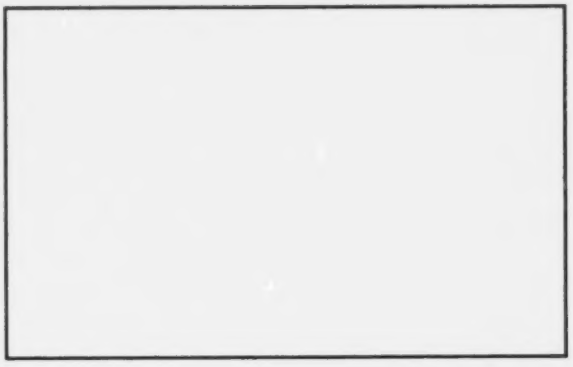
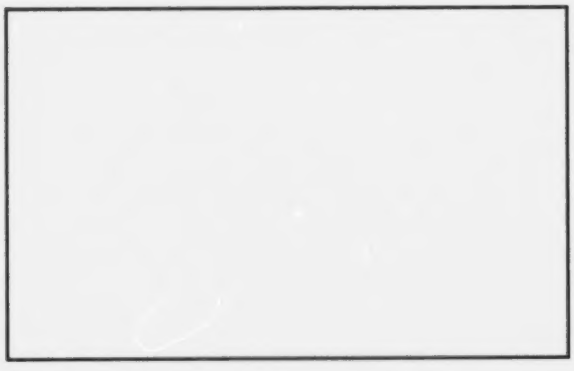
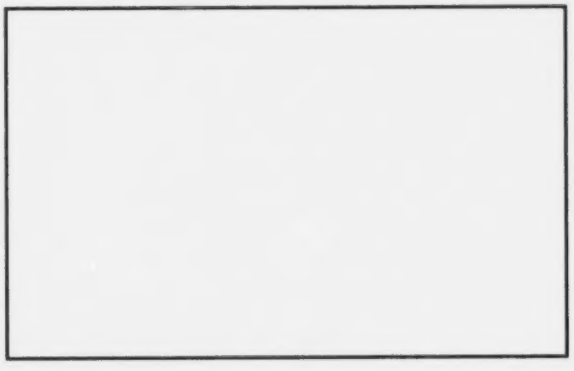
*These books and articles have a wealth of information and are easily accessible to supplement your teaching unit.

Student Worksheet

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Maria Martinez

Maria Martinez

ART CRITICISM

IMAGE: Detail from Ceramic Coil Pot, 1939
MEDIUM: Clay
LOCATION: National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D. C.
SIZE: 11 1/8" x 13"

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art criticism before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn To:

- describe and analyze the elements of art in works of art
- interpret the meaning of works of art
- make informed judgments about works of art based on various criteria
- recognize and interpret the artist's intent

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Organize your class for a discussion about the ceramic pot by Maria Martinez and Julian Martinez. Display the art reproduction in a prominent place for viewing. Use the following questions to guide your students in an in-depth discussion. The possible responses that follow each group of questions are included to help support the discussion.

DESCRIPTION:

QUESTIONS

Let's begin our discussion by listing everything we see in the work of art.

What is this object?

What tools and medium did the artist use to build the container?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

This is a black clay pot

It looks like it was made to hold something.

It is round and three-dimensional.

The bottom of the pot is narrow. The middle section is the widest which then tapers in at the top

The pot is freestanding

The pot is divided into three sections, two sections have designs on them.

The artist used a low fire clay to build the container using the coil method.

It was burnished to a high luster with a smooth stone.

Designs were added with a clay slip that dried to a matte finish.

The pot was fired outdoors with wood and dung.

ANALYSIS:

QUESTIONS

What values appear on the container?

What is the form of the pot?

How would you describe the surface designs on the container?

Do any of the shapes seem to represent anything? Animals? Plants?

How are the lines used in the design?

Do the designs repeat?

How would you describe the surface texture of the container?

Do the value and texture create contrast on the surface of the pot? How?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

The pot has two values of black.

The form of the container is round and three-dimensional. The center section is the widest. The opening at the top has a rounded edge and appears to be slightly larger than the base.

The surface designs are divided into three bands. The narrow base has a plain surface. The middle and upper bands are decorated with organic, geometric, angular or curvilinear shapes.

The type of shapes in the middle can be described as a Z shape, an oval similar to a football, a large shape made of a series of elongated triangles and two plant forms with a circle. The large organic design in the middle section may represent a bird.

The type of shapes in the upper band can be described as plant shapes. One group of shapes resembles two flowers and two leaves. Another group of shapes is composed of two rows of scalloped half circles, bordering a design of six rectangles and a long center rectangular shape with a series of dots, which may represent clouds or corn. A third group of shapes can not be seen because it circles around the back of the image.

Lines are also used to decorate the vessel. There are two lines that encircle the pot between the upper and middle bands. Other vertical and diagonal lines are repeated on the surface of the pot for decoration. The lines are about the same width with smooth straight edges.

Several of the groups of shapes are repeated twice and others repeat four times. The lines and textures also repeat.

The surface of the container has a shiny, polished texture and a dull, matte texture. The designs are visible as a result of the change in texture.

The container looks smooth and hard.

Contrast is created by the different textures and by the variety of geometric and organic shapes.

INTERPRETATION:

QUESTIONS

Why was this vessel created?

Does this pot look special or important?

What idea(s) in Pueblo culture could the designs represent?

Does it express an important idea? If so, what is it?

What does this vessel represent in Pueblo culture?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

This vessel was created for functional uses. The shape and size of the pot indicate that it was probably used to carry water or store food.

The pot was very special because it looks like it was built and decorated very carefully.

The designs suggest a balance and harmony with nature because they appear to represent plant and animal forms. The designs repeat and circle the vessel.

The pot could also represent the connection of modern Pueblo people with their ancestors.

Announce the artist, title and date of the work of art

A confirmation check from outside sources is used to support the interpretation of the work. Present the following confirmation check to your students. Compare the experts' statements with your students' interpretations. Are they similar? Different? Ask your students to respond to the experts' statements.

CONFIRMATION CHECK:

Maria Martinez, a Native American from San Ildefonso Pueblo, made and burnished the pottery and her husband Julian painted the designs with clay slip. "These initial pieces had matte backgrounds with polished **avanyu** designs. The **avanyu** is the horned water serpent, which Julian interpreted as the first rush of water coming down an arroyo after a thunderstorm, a symbol of thanksgiving for water and rain"[1] Water symbols appear on Pueblo pottery because they represent rain, fertility and abundant crops, upon which the Pueblo people depend for their survival. The Martinezes adapted their shapes and forms from old pottery shards that were found at an archeological dig which Julian had been paid to help excavate. "Some of the old stylized patterns are thought to be mountains, clouds, rain falling both near and far away, lightning, birds, feathers, leaves, seeds, pods, tracks of roadrunners, and mythical symbols such as the water serpent."[2] These pots were used for domestic as well as spiritual uses: storage jars, water jugs, bowls of various sizes and shapes, lidded vessels, prayer meal boxes and bowls and the double-spouted wedding jar for wedding ceremonies. Domestic cooking pots were unpolished and undecorated while the ceremonial pots were painted with polychrome designs. "Maria and Julian also discovered that black wares, which they invented, were easier to do than polychrome pottery. The black decorated pieces were generally conceived as tourist items and not as ceremonial or utility pieces for use at the Pueblo."[3] After burnishing the pot and painting it with slip, the technique of reduction firing, or "smothering" was used to produce the black color.

"By 1919 Maria and Julian were producing vessels that were not only technically outstanding, but artistically superior. The classical shapes were flawless and the new shapes were well proportioned, graceful, and pleasing. Julian's sense of design worked in harmony with the surface he was to decorate, creating masterpieces in pottery."[4]

After the confirmation check, continue to Judgment

JUDGEMENT:

QUESTIONS

What is the merit of this container?

Did it fulfill the artist's intent? How?

What makes this container an important work of art?

What criteria would you use to make a judgment about the value of this work?

Did Maria Martinez's work affect other potters around her? How?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

This ceramic vessel was made by a very important Native American artist.

The vessel is very well made and beautifully decorated.

The artist wanted to create a functional item to store food or water.

Pottery is very important to the Native American people for economic and spiritual reasons.

It represents a revival of ancient traditions that are sacred to modern Pueblo people.

It represents the harmony between humans and nature.

The designs were painted freehand with a brush made of a yucca leaf.

It is very difficult to build, decorate and fire a pot using traditional hand building techniques and materials.

The revival of pottery gave the Pueblo people more economic security and a way to earn money for their families and communities.

The Pueblo people gained international recognition and respect as artists as a result of the quality of their pottery.

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[1] Susan Peterson. The Living Tradition of Maria Martinez. (Tokyo, New York, London: Kodansha America, Inc., 1977) 94.

[2] Peterson 94.

[3] Peterson 96-106.

[4] Richard L. Spivey. Maria. (Flagstaff, Arizona: Northland Publishing, 1989) 59.

ART CRITICISM ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #1

1. Have students collect images of contemporary potters in your community. Newspapers, local galleries, art publications are good sources.
2. Display all of the images they collect along with the image of the Martinez vessel.
3. Divide your class into small groups of four or five students and ask each group to select a contemporary potter and compare/contrast that potters work with the work of Maria and Julian Martinez. Remind your students to use the processes of description, analysis, interpretation and judgment.
4. After they have completed their comparisons, have each group write the results of their comparison in a paper.
5. When the writings are completed, exchange them among the groups and ask each group to read the new paper they have received in the exchange. In their reading, your students should examine the criteria used to support the work of each artists. Ask each group to determine if the criteria are the same or different for each artist and explain why.
6. Have each group present their findings to the entire class. The group who wrote the original paper may wish to challenge the findings of the group to whom they gave their paper during the exchange. Make certain that your students understand the importance of stating criteria and using sound reasons to support those criteria.

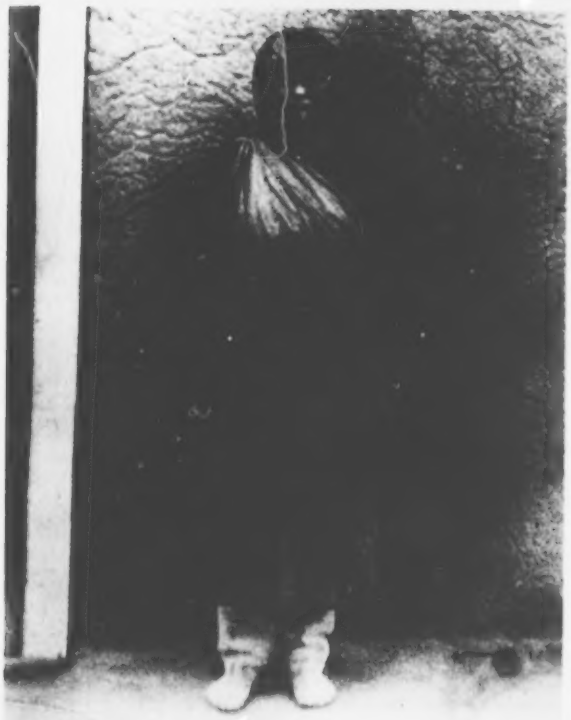
ACTIVITY #2

Ask your students to contrast and compare the work of the Martinezes with the works of the following artisits:

- Lucy Lewis
- Helen Cordero
- Nampeyo
- Josephine Nahohai
- Peter Voulkos
- Margaret Tafoya
- Bernard Leach
- Shoji Hamada
- Pablo Picasso's ceramics
- Maija Grotell
- Paul Soldner

ART HISTORY

Maria Martinez



Maria Martinez, ca.1925, Courtesy of Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona, Photographer: C. M. Wood

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art history before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn:

- about the artist's life
- how life experiences (social, political, economical) influence the artist
- about the artist's media and technique
- about the artist's intent and the context of the work of art

Maria Martinez is the most famous Native American artist of all time. She received honorary Doctorate degrees from New Mexico State University and Columbia University. She was also honored with the first Annual Governor's Award from the New Mexico Arts Commission in 1974. Today her legacy inspires the continuation of a tradition of excellence in pottery making.

FAMILY INFLUENCES

Maria Montoya (môn-TÔl-ya) Martinez (mär-TEEN-ez) was born sometime around the year 1887. There is no record of the exact date of her birth. She was born in the Pueblo of San Ildefonso, which lies twenty miles northwest of Santa Fe, New Mexico in the Pajarito (pä-hä-REE-toe) Plateau near the Rio Grande. Maria was the second of five daughters born to Tomas Montoya and Reyes Peña (PÂ-nyä). Her four sisters were Maximiliana, Desideria (dez-ä-der-EE-ä), Juanita (hwå-NEE-tå) and Clara.

Every year, Maria and Desideria would play house together near an irrigation ditch.[1] One year, while playing, they decided that their house needed some dishes. The girls asked their aunt Nicolasa Peña Montoya, an excellent potter, to help them. Nicolasa taught them the technique of coiling and how to fire pots in a pit. Before firing, they made an offering of corn meal and said a prayer of thanks to Mother Earth for her gift. For the rest of the summer, the two sisters continued making dishes for the playhouse.

Martinez's next encounter with clay came when her great-grandmother was about to die. Before her death, Maria's great grandmother called her family together and bequeathed each of her belongings to individual family members upon her death. Her daughter would receive her house, her two granddaughters would have her jewelry and dance costumes and each of her great-granddaughter's would receive one piece of her pottery. Her pottery included samples from different pueblos throughout the southwest. Once her great-grandmother had passed away, Maria and Desideria, along with their mother and grandmother, opened an old storeroom that contained sixteen pots; one for each of the fourteen great-granddaughters and one for each of the two granddaughters. Maria selected an old red burnished pot that was made in San Ildefonso to fill with popcorn.[2]

The life and values of the pueblo were very important to Martinez. The men owned the land, but the women owned the houses. The church and plaza were cleaned by the women, while the men cleaned the irrigation ditches, the kiva and mended walls. Everyone shared the tasks of the pueblo. Without everyone's cooperation, the fields could not be harvested nor could the sacred ceremonies be held. Cooperation was essential to their survival.

EDUCATION

Martinez's parents believed in educating their children and for many years they attended the government school on the pueblo. When they were older, the tribal council voted to send Maria and Desideria to St. Catherine's Indian School in Santa Fe for the school year, because they were excellent students. Maria spoke three languages: Tewa, her native tongue, Spanish and English. Upon her return to the pueblo from St. Catherine's school, Martinez was not sure what she wanted to do. Once she arrived, she decided to work as an assistant to the teacher at the government school for a year in exchange for lessons. Maria even thought about becoming a teacher herself.

During this time, Maria met her husband, Julian Martinez. The couple married during the spring of 1904 and had four sons: Adam, Juan, Popovi Da and Felipe. Immediately after their marriage, Maria and

Julian left for St. Louis where they had been hired to dance and sing with other Native Americans at the World's Fair. In addition, Maria was asked to demonstrate and make pottery. In the fall, the couple returned to the pueblo with gifts of tobacco, cloth and candy for their families.[3]

THE DIG

In the summer of 1907, Dr. Edgar L. Hewett, who founded the School of American Research, came to the Pajarito Plateau to study and excavate the *old* village of San Ildefonso. Hewitt hired workers from the pueblo to dig at the site. Julian was hired and received a silver dollar per day for his labor. To work there, Julian had to leave his family behind. Around the pueblo, timber companies had logged so many trees on the hills that the soil was eroding farm land. To make matters worse, the annual spring rains that the farmers relied upon came all at once and therefore the seasonal crops were ruined. Working at the archeological site was the only means for making a living for the coming year.[4]

The next summer, Dr. Hewett's group returned and, once again, Julian was hired to work at the site. This time, Julian and Maria went together. The museum men knew Maria made pottery and encouraged her to work. She was hesitant because she had no way to carry what she made home to her family. Also, the tradition of the was pueblo to make only what was needed. If utilitarian dishes, bowls or storage jars were needed, they were made but not decorated. If there was a special occasion, such as a wedding or sacred ceremony, then the pottery was decorated with significant symbols.

While working at the site, Julian was supplied with drawing paper, watercolors and colored pencils to copy the cave and dance designs. Some round, smooth stones were also found at the excavation. When Maria Martinez was asked what the stones might have been used for, she identified them as polishing stones for pottery. She found several more polishing stones and took them home with her for her own use. At the end of the summer, Dr. Hewett again tried to encourage Maria to make pottery in the "old way" when she returned to the pueblo. He gave her an old piece of pottery to copy. The potsherd was hard and thin with a dark, shiny gray ground with fine black lines drawn on it. Maria promised to try to make the pots, but she had never decorated one with designs. The archeologists suggested that, Julian draw the designs on the pottery. This suggestion reinforced the old tradition, when the women made the pottery and the men painted the decorations. Now Maria and Julian would begin their work together. This marked the beginning of the revival of traditional pottery in the pueblo.[5]

At this time, the production of pottery was in decline, as well as the artistic and technical skill needed to make the pottery. The railroad, built in 1880, made commercial dishware and tin cooking pots easily accessible. There was no need for the women in the pueblo to continue making their own dishware. As a result, just a few women were skilled at making the traditional pottery forms. The tourists wanted smaller pieces in the forms of pitchers, candlesticks and vases, usually with black and red designs on a white ground.[6]

"I just thank God because it's not only for me; it's for all the people. I said to my god, the Great Spirit, my Mother Earth gave me this luck. So I'm not going to keep it. I take care of our people. And I'm glad that those ladies learn and everything, and I'm happy."[13]

Maria Martinez

MAKING NEW "OLD" POTTERY

In the beginning of 1909, Maria and Julian went to get some fine sand and clay to make the new "old" pottery. Maria mixed the clay, while Julian made brushes by chewing the ends of yucca leaves. He also received some guaco (Rocky Mountain Bee plant—wild spinach—boiled to a thick syrup) from Aunt Nicolasa to paint the designs. That winter, the couple made and fired five pots together. Three of them came out perfectly with the black design on gray ground. The other two turned completely black and were ruined. They sold the three good pots to Dr. Hewett when he returned in the spring. He encouraged them to continue using the old designs on their polychrome pots. Later, he would sell their pieces at the museum. During that same winter, Maria's mother passed away during the childbirth of her sister, Clara. Julian and Maria raised Clara as their own.

During that summer, Maria remained at the Pueblo to make pottery while Julian worked at the archaeological site again. When he came home, there were about two hundred pots to decorate that winter. But, Dr. Hewitt offered Julian a custodial position at the new museum in Santa Fe, where he would decorate the pottery Maria had made during the summer. Eventually, Maria and the children joined him in Santa Fe. The couple continued to make, fire and sell their work at the museum. Unable to supply the demand for their work Julian went to the Pueblo to pick up pots made by Maria's sisters. Her sisters were also making polychrome pots of red, black beige on white. Maria and Julian sold her sisters pots as their own because the style of San Ildefonso was similar and no one would know the difference. In addition, Julian also brought the two "ruined" black pots for sale. The tourists liked the black pots better than the others.

Maria and her family lived at the Museum of New Mexico for three years (1909-1912). Eventually, the family decided to go back to the pueblo where they felt more at home. Their income from selling and decorating pots would provide them with a comfortable living. The initial accident in firing that resulted in the two "ruined" black pots, turned out to be a lucky error. Buyers were now demanding the black pottery. Julian had to experiment with the firing and eventually discovered that by smothering the flames, without actually putting the fire out, he could make the plain black pots like the style of pottery made in the Santa Clara pueblo. The black pots, that did not require decoration, were now in demand.

WORLD'S FAIRS

In 1915, Maria and Julian traveled to the World's Fair in San Diego to demonstrate the polychrome pottery-making and decorating. With their earnings, they were able to add a room onto the front of their house where they sold their pottery and some groceries. Polychrome pottery was made until 1925, when Julian's invention of "black on black ware" became more in demand. Maria and Julian also demonstrated their new technique at the 1934 Chicago World's Fair and the 1939 San Francisco World's Fair. They bought a cookstove from a mail order catalog with their earnings.

BLACK ON BLACK WARE

This new process of creating pottery with dull black designs on a shiny black surface, known as "black on black ware" is now recognized worldwide and is the distinguishing quality of San Ildefonso pottery. "By 1919 Maria and Julian were producing vessels that were not only technically outstanding, but artistically superior. The classical shapes were flawless and the new shapes were well-proportioned, graceful and pleasing. Julian's sense of design worked in harmony with the surface he was to decorate, creating masterpieces in pottery art."[8]

Julian kept a notebook of designs from ancient and modern sources—mainly the archaeological digs and the museums in Santa Fe—which appealed to him. He is credited with reviving the *avanyu* (ä-VAN-yu) the plumed water serpent design and the Mimbres feather design, which is used in many surrounding pueblos today.[9]

The success of Julian and Maria's work encouraged other women to produce pots for additional income. The traditional philosophy held that, if one family in the pueblo was suffering, all the people suffered. If one family prospered, they should all prosper. Maria and Julian believed in this philosophy and shared their knowledge with the rest of the pueblo. In this way, they improved the standard of living for everyone in the pueblo. In 1940, Julian was chosen as governor of the pueblo and served his term taking care of the people. He died in 1943.

SIGNATURES

Somewhere between 1923 and 1925, Maria started signing her signatures on the bottom of her pots. There are seven different signature inscriptions that she used over her lifetime:

Marie
Marie & Julian
Marie & Santana (her daughter-in-law)
Maria & Santana
Maria Poveka (her native name)
Poh'ye'ka
Maria Popovi (her son)

The signing was encouraged because it increased the commercial value of the pottery. Maria did not attach any particular value to the signatures. To confuse issues further, she signed some pots with pencil and felt tip marker after they were fired. Her name is always first and the decorator's name is second. Although some of the pottery she signed was not made by her, Maria viewed her signature as a means of giving credit to the Pueblo and making the owner of the pot feel good.

Although it was Maria's name that always appeared on the finished pieces, the work that went into producing the work always involved her family. Maria's husband, her sisters, her daughter-in-law, and her son contributed to the pieces by polishing or decorating. It was a collaborative venture that benefited everyone. Some of Maria's pots produced during the years of 1907-1943, may have been signed by her sister, Clara who did the polishing. A few years after Julian's death, Clara and Maria lived with her son Adam and his wife, Santana. Maria made pots and Santana decorated them. In 1956, her son, Popovi Da

"I was never selfish with my work, for what God gave me. And so I help everybody. I used to teach at the government school in Santa Fe, the younger people from different pueblos. And now those ladies have... children, grandchildren, married. But some still come and visit me and thank me for what they learned from me. So I said, God gave me that hand, but not for myself, for all my people."[14]

Maria Martinez

decorated her pots. In 1959, the month and year was added to the signature. Popovi Da died in 1971.[10]

THREE GENERATIONS

In 1967, Maria, Popovi Da, and Maria's grandson, Tony Da had an exhibition of their work, entitled *Three Generation Show* at the Center for the Arts of Indian America. Maria received Honorary Doctorates from New Mexico State University in Las Cruces in 1971 and in 1977, she received another from Columbia University in Chicago. She also earned the first Annual Governor's Award from the New Mexico Arts Commission in 1974. Maria Martinez visited the White House on many occasions, under several administrations including those of Hoover, Roosevelt, Eisenhower and Johnson.

To encourage craftsmanship and the use of ancient patterns on pottery, the School of American Research started the Santa Fe Indian Market which stimulated the production of fine quality pots. This fair still continues today. Over the years, Maria consistently won many top awards at the Native American Inter-Tribal Ceremonials.

"Her life has not been an easy one; she has had to work for whatever she earned. She worked long hours, days and years to develop her pottery skills. She had her family to raise and care for. She had her community and ceremonial obligations, which she took seriously. She has lost a husband and three sons. Yet each time, Maria surmounted these tragedies. Maria has strength, spirit and character."[11] Maria Martinez died on July 20, 1980.

THE FUNERAL

"Only three or four outsiders were present at her funeral at San Ildefonso. After the funeral sermon, in which the officiating Catholic priest said the great Maria Martinez was now one with her beloved kachinas, she was laid to rest. Maria was buried in a deep grave next to her husband, Julian, who died in 1943, in the little cemetery in front of the pueblo's old church.

There was no coffin, only a Navajo blanket in which her body was wrapped to be carried to the graveside. Over her face she had a "cloud mask," for in the belief of the Pueblo peoples, kachinas are not only intermediaries between the people and the gods, but bringers of rain.

As her body was lowered to the bottom of the grave, the assembled mourners were startled—and moved—to see a large cricket fly down and settle on Maria's cloud mask. It remained there for some minutes, motionless. In the belief of some Indian peoples, the soul, or life force, changes at death into an insect. To those familiar with this widespread concept, the symbolism was almost overwhelming. As they watched, silent and deeply moved, the cricket at last flexed its transparent wings. Like the very image of Maria's soul, it rose up out of the grave and, after circling above the mourners once or twice, disappeared into the blue New Mexican sky."[12]

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES

Maria collected clay and volcanic ash from nearby hills surrounding the Pueblo. Before taking any clay, she made an offering of cornmeal and

spoke a prayer of thanks to Mother Earth. Maria then ground the clay into powder, sifted it through flour sacks or mesh screen and finally added water and ash in order to make the clay plastic.

To make a pot, a ball of clay was flattened into a pancake and formed in the saucer-shaped puki. Round coils of clay were added to the base to form a cylinder. By pushing out on the cylinder from the inside, Maria was able to create the pot's form. The pot was then scraped with a piece of gourd and sanded smooth. Then a clay slip was applied and burnished with a smooth polishing stone which created the polished surface. Another layer of slip was applied to decorate the pot which turned matte black when fired. To fire the pots, a pit was lined with cedar bark, covered with metal and broken pottery sherds. The pots were layered on top. Then, more cedar was carefully placed over the pots and formed the final layer in the pit. An offering of cornmeal was sprinkled over the pit and a prayer was offered asking for the firing to go well. The fire was lit and burned very hot before it was smothered with dung to produce a reduction firing which made the pots turn black. Finally, the cooled pots were lifted out of the pit and cleaned with a soft cloth.

[1] Alice Marriott, Maria: The Potter of San Ildefonso (The University of Oklahoma Press, 1948). This book is an oral history gathered in 1945 and 1946 by the ethnographer, Alice Marriott with daily interviews with Maria Martinez.

[2] Marriott 69.

[3] Marriott 119-124.

[4] Marriott 119-174.

[5] Susan Peterson, "The Matriarchs of Pueblo Pottery," Portfolio Nov Dec 1980: 52-55.

[6] Richard L. Spivey, Maria: Revised and Expanded Edition (Flagstaff, Arizona: Northland Publishing, (1979) 1989) 13.

[7] Marriott 190-209.

[8] Spivey 59.

[9] Spivey 30.

[10] Spivey 63-68.

[11] Spivey 5.

[12] Letter received from Peter T. Furst, 17 Jan. 1994.

[13] Spivey 149.

[14] Spivey 149.

[15] Spivey 28.

"But I was the only one that work nearly everyday. Those others, they just work—they start in June, July, August, and then when that chile harvest come, then they quit. And the other ladies, they didn't care, poor things."[15]

Maria Martinez

Maria Martinez

AESTHETICS

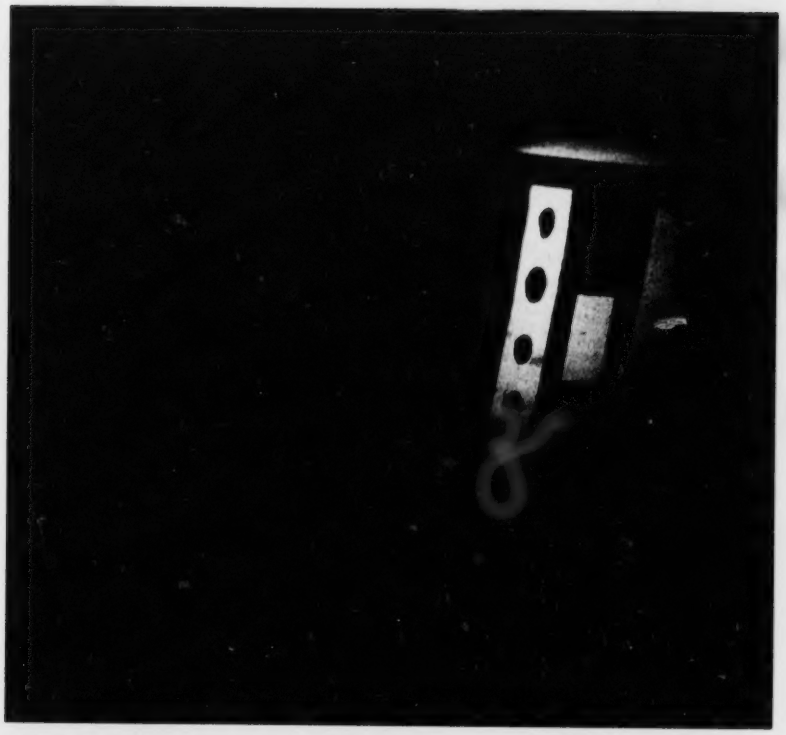


IMAGE: Detail from Ceramic Coil Pot, 1939
MEDIUM: Clay
LOCATION: National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D. C.
SIZE: 11 1/8" x 13"

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for aesthetics before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn To:

- examine different theories of art
- discuss various criteria for valuing art
- analyze the ceramic coil pot from a variety of philosophical viewpoints
- develop logical arguments based on sound reasoning

AESTHETIC THEORIES:

The following theories present different viewpoints from which we can consider works of art. They are summarized in the boxes below in language appropriate for your students. Introduce and/or review the theories if necessary.

IMITATIONALISM
Literal Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the realistic presentation of subject matter. A work is successful if it looks like and reminds us of what we see in the real world.

FORMALISM
Visual Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the effective organization of the elements of art through the arrangement of visual principles.

EXPRESSIONISM
Emotional Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the vivid communication of moods, feelings and ideas to the viewer.

INSTRUMENTALISM
Functional Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is that it serves a function that is practical or furthers moral, religious, social or political points of view.

INSTITUTIONALISM
Contextual Classification

The most important thing about a work of art is the context in which it exists and in which it is validated by the artworld.

Theories:

Imitationalism

Formalism

Expressionism

Instrumentalism

Institutionalism

AESTHETIC QUESTIONS:

Organize your students for a discussion. Work with your entire class or divide students into groups. Discuss one or more of the following aesthetic questions. In addition to a discussion, you may choose to ask students to write their answers to the questions and present them to the class.

1. Maria Martinez and her husband, Julian, collaborated to make their pottery. The idea of collaboration has a long tradition in Native American cultures. Do you think the importance and value of a work of art is compromised when more than one person is involved in its creation? Why or why not?

2. Maria and Julian Martinezes' pottery was a revival of ancient traditions that were based on the designs and techniques used by their ancestors. Do you consider their work to be original? Why or why not? Is it important that art be original?

3. Was the pottery produced by the Martinez family made to be functional? In your opinion, can functional objects be art? Why or why not? If you do not consider it to be art, how would you classify it?

4. Do you consider the pottery of Maria and Julian Martinez to be art in the same way that you would consider a painting to be art? Why or why not?

5. Read the following quote to your students and discuss the aesthetic issues it presents:

   > "The legacy of Maria is a significant one. In the first part of the twentieth century, Pueblo pottery-making was in serious decline and economic conditions at the pueblos were at an all-time low. There were many who predicted a total demise of the art. Then came Maria and Julian Martinez, who by their example were the key figures in leading a pottery revival. Their influence was quickly felt at San Ildefonso, but soon extended to the other pueblos as well, and pottery-making once again became an important economic product.....perhaps more important, Maria and Julian saved an important part of the American cultural heritage from extinction."[1]

   As artists, how did Maria and Julian Martinez contribute to Pueblo culture? Is it the responsibility of artists to contribute in some way to their culture? In what other ways do artists impact the people around them?

6. Over the years, the pottery of Maria Martinez has increased in monetary value. In traditional Pueblo culture a potter did not sign their work. All pottery was made for use in the community and the individual's name was not important. When anthropologists, museum curators and traders became interested in Native American pottery, they encouraged the potters to sign their names on their pots. When a potter of Maria Martinez's skill signed a vessel, it immediately increased the commercial value outside the pueblo. This being the case, what is really valued? The work itself? The person who made it? The signature? In your opinion, what do you consider to be the real value of a work of art?

7. People from different cultures sometimes have different beliefs about art and its importance in their society. Is it right to use the beliefs about art from one cultural perspective to judge the art of another culture? Is it possible to understand the art of another culture? Is it important to do so? Explain your answers.

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Richard L. Spivey, Maria (Flagstaff, Arizona: Northland Publishing, 1989) 157

Maria Martinez

FOR THE TEACHER
ART PRODUCTION GUIDE

"Pottery With a Spirit"

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art production before beginning this component of the lesson.

TEACHER PREPARATION:

1. Read the "Art Production Guide" and "Student Planning Guide" for Maria Martinez.
2. Duplicate the "Student Planning Guide" and the "Thumbnail Sketches Worksheet".
3. Prepare the necessary art materials and prepare to demonstrate any studio techniques as needed. Practice with the materials before you begin.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS: *self-hardening or regular clay, clay tools, water containers, water, gloss and matte black glazes, brushes and kiln*

4. Plan your schedule to allow time for your students to research, investigate, explore, create, reflect and assess their work.
5. The criteria for the following art production activity are based on the work of Maria Martinez. The list below is a summary of the characteristics of her work. Use this list as a reference for review.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MARTINEZ'S WORK:

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- used a symmetrical form with asymmetrical designs
- created repetition of lines and shapes
- used contrasting textures of matte and shiny
- used stylized, geometric and organic shapes

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM:

- used shapes to represent nature and spiritual concerns of the pueblo

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- used clay construction techniques of slab and coil combined
- used burnishing and reduction firing techniques

ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY:

Ask your students to make a ceramic vessel using hand building techniques and decorate it with designs that represent an environmental concern.

CRITERIA FOR ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY:

Have your students incorporate the following criteria into their work These criteria will provide the structure upon which you can base your assessment of their learning.

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- use a symmetrical form and decorate it with the asymmetrical placement of designs
- create repetition with lines and stylized geometric and organic shapes

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM:

- use designs to express an environmental concern

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- use clay construction techniques of slab and coil
- demonstrate skillful use of the media

ART PRODUCTION WITH THE CLASS:

PREPARATION:

1. Review the characteristics of Martinez's work.
2. Distribute and introduce the Student Planning Guide. Read it with your students and check for their understanding.
3. Introduce the art production activity and criteria.
4. Introduce or review vocabulary as needed.

PRESENTATION:

Discuss the following ideas with your students before they begin their pottery.

1. The names of Native American pueblos are in the Southwest: Taos, Picuris, San Juan, Santa Clara, San Ildefonso, Nambe, Pojoaque, Tesuque, Sandia, Isleta, Cochiti, Santo Domingo, San Felipe, Santa Ana, Zia, Jemez, Languna, Acoma, Zuni and Hopi.

   Life in the pueblo cultures is based on traditions that reflect the importance of the agricultural cycles of the year, spiritual beliefs that reflect the importance of nature and a strong sense of family and community. Religious ceremonies are coordinated with the spring equinox and winter solstice. Hunting is important but agriculture is central to rituals in the pueblos. Water, which is often scarce in the high desert is very important to survival. Therefore, water symbols are very important and often appear on the pottery. Other important symbols represent fertility and longevity

   Maria and Julian Martinez decorated their pottery with symbols. The symbols represent—corn, seeds, water, leaves, birds and rain, and have spiritual significance in the Pueblo. The use of symbols is believed to encourage fertility and a good harvest.

   Ask students if these beliefs are important in their own culture? Why or why not? What are the differences between the pueblo cultures and their own culture? Are the Pueblo people concerned with natural resources? Does contemporary society share these concerns? If so, how? What are some of the concerns for the environment today? What concerns do your students have?

2. Make a list of these environmental concerns on the chalkboard. Have students brainstorm numerous symbols for each concern that could represent that particular idea.

PRODUCTION:

1. Have your students begin working with the Student Planning Guide sections I through IV.
2. Introduce and demonstrate media and techniques as needed.
3. Have your students complete the art production activity.

VOCABULARY:

Abstraction—
to reduce to greater simplicity; to make plain or easy; obtained by distillation of the main characteristics of an object

Utilitarian—
to make useful or to be designed for a use

Blackware, or black on black—
a type of pottery that is decorated with matte black designs on a shiny black surface

Burnished—
a smooth glossy surface on pottery achieved by polishing with a smooth stone

Symbol—
something that stands for another thing; especially an object that represents something abstract—a flag for patriotism or a dove for peace

Stylized—
to make or conform to a given style; to represent in a standardized manner

Reduction Firing—
a firing process that eliminates the oxygen and produces a black surface on hardened clay

Pueblo—
Spanish word for town; also used to refer to native American people who live in the southwest; the term used to describe the architecture of the Pueblo people

ASSESSMENT:

1. The Student Planning Guide asks your students to assess their own learning. After they have completed their written evaluations, gather your class for a group discussion. Ask your students to review the criteria and discuss their own work in relation to those criteria. Encourage your students to use their written comments to support their remarks.
2. Use information from your students' written assessments and group discussion to assist you in your final assessment. Your students work and their planning guides will provide useful information for portfolio assessment.
3. Exhibit your students' artwork.

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Name Date

Maria Martinez

STUDENT PLANNING GUIDE

"Pottery With a Spirit"

This worksheet is designed to help you develop an idea for your art production. These exercises will help organize your thoughts to create a powerful statement and composition.

The pottery of Maria and Julian Martinez personifies a way of life based on the traditions of their ancestors. The Martinezes' work was evidence of their participation as active contributing community members in a society that depends on cooperation for its survival. Despite the availability of the potter's wheel, Maria and Julian Martinez continued to make their pottery in the traditional way.

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I. ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Your challenge is to make a ceramic vessel using hand building techniques and to decorate it with designs that represent an environmental concern.

CRITERIA FOR ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Incorporate the following criteria into your ceramic vessel.

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- create a symmetrical form and decorate it with the asymmetrical placement of designs
- create repetition with lines and stylized geometric and organic shapes

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM:

- use designs to express an environmental concern

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- use clay construction techniques of slab and coil
- demonstrate skillful use of media

II. RESEARCH/HOMEWORK/ART JOURNAL

Complete the research necessary to answer the following questions. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. What are the characteristics of the pottery from the pueblos of the Southwestern United States. What function does the pottery have in the culture of the native peoples of the Southwest? Are there differences from pueblo to pueblo? What are the domestic uses of their pottery? The spiritual uses? What do the symbols mean? Are the symbols from different pueblos similar in style?
2. What is the meaning of the symbols found on the pottery by Maria Martinez?
3. Collect magazines and look for symbols that represent different aspects of nature and the environment.

II. BRAINSTORMING/GETTING AN IDEA

Make a list of at least three possible ideas for your vessel. Answer the following questions. What are some forms you might use? What types of designs could you use? What could your designs symbolize?

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IV. SELECTION

Select your best idea. Choose the designs you wish to use and discuss the ideas they symbolize.

V. DESIGN/PREPARE SKETCHES

Draw thumbnail sketches of your clay vessel on the worksheet. Carefully consider the relationships among your symmetrical clay form and the designs you wish to use for decoration.

VI. MATERIALS

Discuss your sketches and the materials you will need to complete your vessel with your teacher. List the materials you will need below.

VII. PRODUCTION

(Fill out during the production of your work of art.) Build and decorate your vessel. Analyze any problems you experienced while working and note them below. If you encountered mistakes, how did you incorporate them into your work?

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VIII. SELF-ASSESSMENT

(Fill out after the completion of your assignment.) The assessment of your work is based on the criteria listed in Section I. Review the criteria before you assess your work.

How effectively does your work meet the criteria?

In your own words, state what you have learned by doing this activity.

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Maria Martinez

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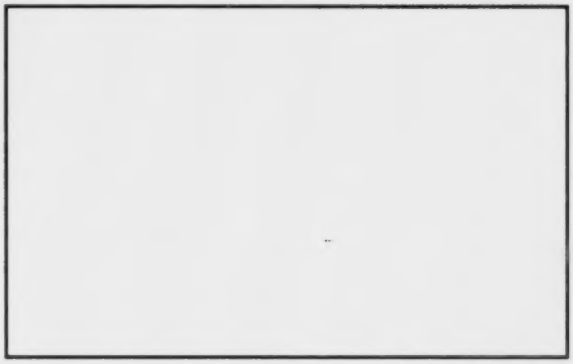
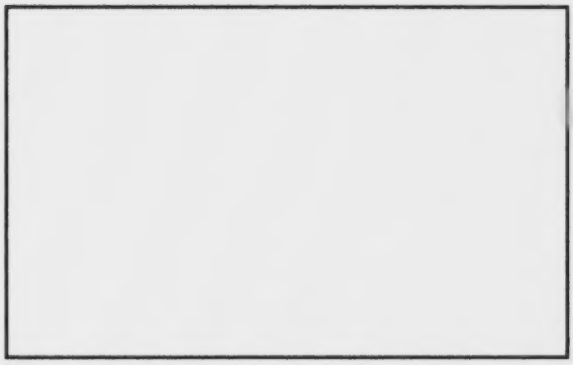
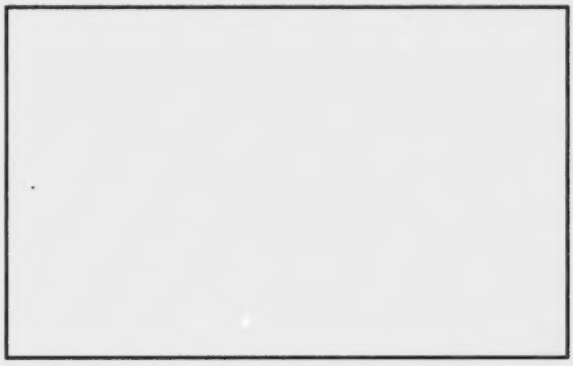
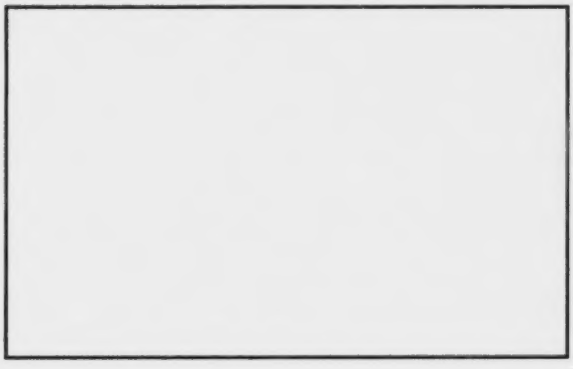
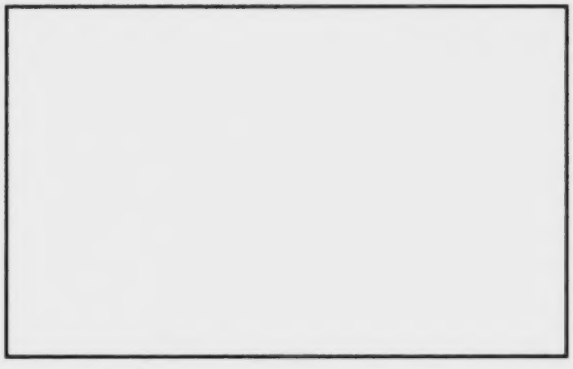
*These books and articles have a wealth of information and are easily accessible to supplement your teaching unit.

Student Worksheet







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Alice Neel

ART CRITICISM

Alice Neel

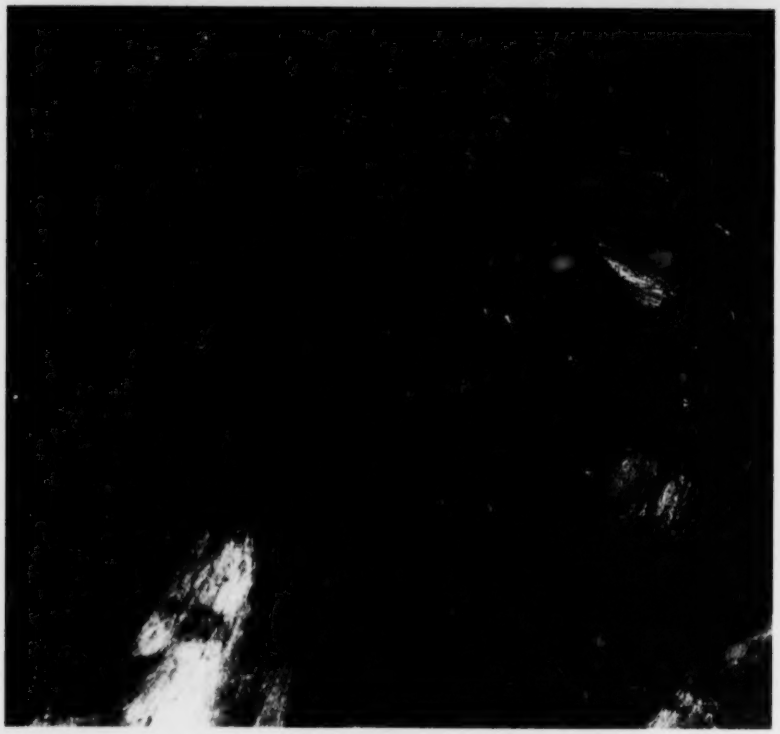

IMAGE: Detail from T.B. Harlem, 1940
MEDIUM: Oil on canvas
LOCATION: National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.
SIZE: 30" x 30"

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art criticism before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn To:

- describe and analyze the elements of art in works of art
- interpret the meaning of works of art
- make informed judgments about works of art based on various criteria
- recognize and interpret the artist's intent

Organize your class for a discussion about the painting T.B. Harlem by Alice Neel. Display the art reproduction in a prominent place for viewing. Use the following questions to guide your students in an in-depth discussion. The possible responses that follow each group of questions are included to help support the discussion.

DESCRIPTION:

QUESTIONS

Let's begin our discussion by listing everything we see in the work of art.

How would you describe the subject of the painting?

What is the figure doing?

How is the figure seated? Clothed?

What is the setting surrounding the figure?

What other details do you notice?

What medium and techniques were used by the artist to create the painting?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

T.B. Harlem depicts a woman or man lying on a bed or a couch.

The person is very thin and looks very fragile.

There is a bandage on the chest or breast of the figure.

The person is covered up to the waist with a sheet and bare from the belly button up.

There is a black spot on the figure's waist.

In the background, there seems to be a black strip running vertically on the wall. It may be an opening between two curtains or perhaps a curtain and wall.

There is a light area above the head.

The medium is oil painting.

In some places the oil looks thick. In others, it looks thin.

The paint is not always blended smoothly.

The date and time of day are hard to determine in this painting.

ANALYSIS:

QUESTIONS

What colors did the artist select?

Is the palette of colors extensive or limited?

What is the most intense color? The most subdued color?

What neutrals were used?

How did the artist use value?

Are there many values or only a few?

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What is the brightest area of the painting? The darkest area?

Does the use of value create the illusion of depth? How?

Which areas seem to recede?

How is form created?

From where does the light source appear to originate?

What effect does the light source create?

What types of shapes did the artist use? Organic? Geometric?

Are the shapes simple or complex?

Do any of the shapes repeat?

Do the shapes create contrast? How?

Do any of the shapes overlap? If so, which ones?

What is the result of the overlapping?

How did the artist use line?

Are the lines uniform or varied? Simple or complex?

How is the element of texture used?

Are there various textures?

Are the textures easily distinguished?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

The colors in this painting are gold, brown, violet, lilac, pink, with values of white, grays and black.

The colors are mixed to produce many hues and many values.

The most intense hue is the violet. The brightest area is the white.

Areas of color repeat throughout the composition.

The values range from very light, as seen in the white bandage and sheet, to a very dark brown in the background which produce contrast.

The brightest areas seem to come forward and the darkest areas appear to recede. The gradual change in values creates the appearance of depth.

There appears to be a light source from above the figure which produces highlights in the middle of the figure.

Circular shapes are used for the bandage, eyes, navel and head.

Rectangular shapes are used for the fingers. The background is also divided into rectangular shapes.

A triangle is formed by the head, body and the background.

The rectangular and circular shapes contrast throughout the composition.

Overlapping shapes contribute to the illusion of depth in the work. For example, the hand overlaps the bandage which overlaps the wound. The body overlaps the bed and the covers overlap the lower portion of the figure.

A thin black line of even consistency outlines the figure and bedcovers.

Softer lines on the bedcovers suggest folds in the cloth.

The surface texture is relatively consistent throughout the painting.

Brush strokes suggest a painterly surface of the canvas. The artist was more interested in the figure than the background.

INTERPRETATION:

QUESTIONS

What happened to the person in the painting?

Is this person a male or a female?

Is the person in pain?

How is pain suggested?

Who is the suggested viewer in this painting?

Does this painting evoke feelings? If so, what feelings? Why?

What do you think was the artist's intent in painting the image?

Is this a painting about one person? About an important idea?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

At this point in the critique there may be confusion of the sex of this individual. In the Confirmation Check below, it is confirmed to be a male.

The person is sick, malnourished or has had an operation.

Judging from the bandage over the breast area, he may have had an operation.

The darker areas painted on the face represent growth of a beard and mustache.

The person is probably in pain, because below the bandage is a large black area.

The person has a blank stare.

The gold color above his head is like a halo, suggesting that this person is very near death.

The viewer is the visitor.

The image may make the viewer feel ill, sad, shocked, sympathetic or frightened.

Announce the artist, title and date of the work of art

A confirmation check from outside sources is used to support the interpretation of the work. Present the following confirmation check to your students. Compare the experts' statements with your students' interpretations. Are they similar? Different? Ask your students to respond to the experts' statements.

CONFIRMATION CHECK:

"Neel's painting *T.B. Harlem* of 1940 is one of her masterpieces and a major social document of its time. This chronicle of tuberculosis, a disease frequently found in the lightless and airless tenements of the urban ghetto, is unflinching in its depiction of a mangled and pain-wracked body. There is no sentimentality or false pathos, just the bare torso exposing a bandage that barely covers the wound where eleven ribs

had been removed. The patient lifts his hand to his bandage, a Christ-like gesture Neel later acknowledged was deliberate. She meant the painting to resemble a traditional crucifixion and, through her somber palette and the figure's gesture, invoked that archetypal image of acceptance and suffering."[1]

"At the turn of this century tuberculosis was the leading cause of death in the United States. It spared no social class but ravaged most severely the poor who lived in crowded ghettos such as New York City's Harlem....*T.B. Harlem* shows a man who has undergone a thoracoplasty, the most radical form of collapse treatment. This was usually done in three procedures through a long curving incision parallel to the border of the scapula to expose the chest wall. Ribs 1 through 7, 8 or 9 were freed from their periosteal sheaths and excised, allowing the soft tissues of the chest wall to fall inward on the lung."[2] The procedures were usually done with local anesthetic. The patient shows the pallor characteristic of tuberculosis on the face and shoulders, the atrophied muscles of the arms and hands and severe malnutrition of the abdomen.

After the confirmation check, continue to Judgment

JUDGMENT:

QUESTIONS

What is the merit of this work?

What criteria are you using to judge the merits of this work?

Does your pleasure or lack of pleasure in looking at the image contribute or detract from its value?

Do you think this painting is powerful? Why or why not?

Do you think this painting is beautiful? Why or why not?

Do you like to look at this painting? Would you like to own it?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

This painting is about an illness that effects many people.

It expesses the idea very clearly and powerfully.

It makes you think about the suffering of other people.

The figure is painted very carefully with bold and thin brush strokes.

The figure looks real.

The light and shadows are very harsh and make the painting look stark.

The colors are very beautiful even though the person is suffering.

This person looks very ill and makes the painting very difficult to view.

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[1] Margaret B. Rennolds, Ed. National Museum of Women in the Arts: Selections from the Permanent Collection (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1987.) 88.

[2] William R. Barclay, MD. "The Cover." The Journal of the American Medical Association. March 9, 1984, Vol. 251, No. 10. 1268. This is an excellent critique of *T.B. Harlem* from a medical viewpoint as well as an artistic one. The information supports the visual interpretation.

ART CRITICISM ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #1

1. Ask your students to look carefully at Alice Neel's work and write a descriptive account of what they see. Have them include information about the subject, the form, the medium and the style of the work so the reader will understand the artist's intent. Challenge them to use their language to inform and lead the reader to understand and appreciate the image.
2. Display your students' work with the fine art reproduction or publish their accounts in the school newspaper.

ACTIVITY #2

Ask your students to contrast and compare the work of Alice Neel with works of the following artists:

- Isabel Bishop
- Lucien Freud
- Vincent van Gogh
- Rembrandt
- Andy Warhol
- Chuck Close
- Paul Gauguin
- Käthe Kollwitz
- John Singer Sargent

ART HISTORY

Alice Neel

Alice Neel, Courtesy of Moore College of Art & Design Library Archives

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art history before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn:

- about the artist's life
- how life experiences (social, political, economical) influence the artist
- about the artist's media and technique
- about the artist's intent and the context of the work of art

In 1976, painter Alice Neel, was elected into the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Just two years later, she was selected as one of only five recipients for the National Women's Caucus Art Awards, presented by President Jimmy Carter.

"I love, fear, and respect people and their struggle, especially in the rat race we live in today, becoming every moment fiercer, attaining epic proportions where murder and annihilation are the end. I am psychologically involved and believe no matter how much we are over come by our own advertising and commodities, man himself makes the world."[11]

Alice Neel

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FAMILY INFLUENCES

Alice Neel was born on January 28, 1900 in Merion Square, Pennsylvania and soon after, moved to Colwyn, just outside of Philadelphia. Her Irish father worked as a clerk for the Pennsylvania Railroad and came from a family that included several opera singers. Her mother was a descendant from one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Though an intelligent woman, her mother was also an uncompromising Yankee with firm and clear-cut values. Neel recalls that, during her childhood, her mother would tell her, "I don't know what you expect to do in the world; you're only a girl."[1]

Even as a young child, Alice liked the idea of being in art. **"I always wanted to be an artist. I don't know where it came from. When I was eight years old the most important thing for me was the painting book and watercolors....I didn't take art in high school, but I used to draw heads on the edges of my paper. I was so unsure of myself that the back of the head always went off the paper."**[2]

EDUCATION

Neel took business courses in high school and became an excellent typist and stenographer. After graduation, she took the Civil Service exam and for the next three years worked in various Civil Service jobs while secretly taking evening art classes. Eventually, Neel saved enough money to quit her job and enroll in the Philadelphia School of Design for Women (now Moore College of Art), beginning her path to freedom and a life dedicated to art. Although she first worked from plaster casts, she later drew from live models. Neel believed that drawing was the discipline of art. In 1925, Neel graduated with the equivalent of a Master of Fine Arts degree.

During the summer of 1924, Neel attended the Chester Springs Summer School of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts where she met Cuban aristocrat and artist Carlos Enriquez. She married Enriquez in 1925 and together they traveled to Cuba, where they gave birth to a daughter. Devoted to being artists, they painted every day and sketched every night, using the people of Havana as their subjects.

"A good portrait of mine has even more than just the accurate features. It has some other thing. If I have any talent in relation to people, apart from planning the whole canvas, it is my identification with them. I get so identified when I paint them, when they go home I feel frightful. I have no self—I've gone into this other person. And by doing that, there's a kind of something I get that other artists don't get...It is my way of overcoming the alienation. It's my ticket to reality."[10]

Alice Neel

PERSONAL TRAGEDY

In the fall of 1927, the couple returned to New York where, soon after, their daughter died of diphtheria. Neel was devastated. She became pregnant again and gave birth to another daughter, Isabella. Despite the blessing of another child, tragedy ensued. The couple, unable to support themselves, was forced to separate. Carlos took Isabella to live with his parents in Cuba while he traveled alone to Paris. Neel, struggling with the loss of her first child, unable to care for Isabella and torn by her need to paint, was abandoned. This extremely tumultuous situation pushed Neel into a depression so great that she attempted suicide. In 1930, Neel left New York and entered a hospital in Philadelphia where she was encouraged to draw, and gradually recovered.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Early in 1932, Neel returned to New York with Kenneth Doolittle, an intellectual sailor whom she had met. They lived together in the

bohemian district of Greenwich Village, with other writers, poets and artists "whose social and political ideas she absorbed and adopted."[3] As a result, her work reflected the beliefs associated with the political left.

During the 1930s, the economic stability of the United States collapsed. Many people who were previously employed found themselves without work and the income necessary to support their families. The Great Depression drove many people onto the streets in search of employment, shelter, and food. Neel's paintings capture the overwhelming despair of those forced to struggle for a means of subsistence.

Some examples of these works include:

Longshoremen Coming Home from Work
Magistrate's Court
Investigation of Poverty at the Russell Sage Foundation
Synthesis of New York: The Great Depression
West 17th Street
9th Avenue El
Nazis Murder Jews

Eventually, Neel exhibited her work in an outdoor art fair where she met John Rothschild, who became Neel's lifelong friend. Rothschild courted Neel with restaurants and weekends in the country. Consequently, Doolittle became jealous of their relationship. He slashed sixty of Neel's paintings and destroyed her watercolors, which were essentially a personal record of her life. Neel moved away and never saw him again.

In 1934, Neel joined the Public Works of Art Project which eventually became the Works Progress Administration/Federal Art Project (1935-1943). She was an easel painter and received $26.88 a week to execute a painting every six weeks. Neel worked for the WPA until it ended in 1943.

In 1935, Neel met a Puerto Rican nightclub singer and guitarist, Jose Santiago, with whom she had a son, Richard. Their relationship lasted five years. In 1938, Neel moved to Spanish Harlem where she lived for the next twenty-five years. During this time, she continued to paint and exhibit still-lifes, landscapes/seascapes, images of urban poverty, and portraits of her neighbors, their children, her own family and friends. In 1939, not long after Richard's birth, Santiago left Neel.

Soon after, Neel met a Russian filmmaker and photographer, Sam Brody with whom she had her second son, Harley in 1941. Neel sporadically lived with Brody until 1958. It was during this time that she painted *T.B. Harlem*. Many of Neel's own friends and neighbors contracted tuberculosis (T.B.) because of poor living conditions.

Neel was to experience yet another difficult period in her life. Neel was dependent on the salary she received from the WPA, so when it ended in 1943, she found herself faced with the difficulty of supporting herself and her sons. At the same time, a new art movement, Abstract Expressionism, was gaining momentum. Although Neel continued to paint portraits of John Rothschild's friends and the people of Harlem, painting in a figurative manner was not in vogue. Abstract Expressionism was the dominant style and reached its maturity in the mid-50s. Consequently, she did not sell nor did she exhibit many works of art during the 40s and 50s.[4] Neel was ready to give up painting altogether when she began psychoanalysis in 1958. Fortunately, her doctor encouraged Neel to exhibit her paintings.

"I don't do realism. I do a combination of realism and expressionism. It's never just realism.... Compositionally, a room, a chair, a table, and a person are all the same for me, but a person is human and psychological. The work of the New Realists is boring to me because of no psychological acumen. They don't show a soul out in the world doing things."[9]

Alice Neel

By 1960, Neel's status as an artist was increasingly recognized. Her mature style reflected a less personal and more detached form of expression. She began to paint with brighter and more saturated hues. Figures of famous people, as well as paintings of her family and other families were her subject matter. The paintings examined and reflected her subjects' inner psychological struggle and what she called the "spirit of the age".

Some examples of these portraits include:

Red Grooms (artist)
Frank O'Hara (curator of the Museum of Modern Art and poet)
Stewart Mott (philanthropist)
Andy Warhol (pop artist)
Edward Koch (mayor of New York)
Duane Hanson (sculptor)
Isabel Bishop (painter)
Linda Nochlin (art historian)

During 1974, a major retrospective of Neel's portraits was exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art. In 1981, Neel's work was honored outside of the United States with a solo exhibit at the Artists' Union in Moscow. When she was 80 years old, Neel painted her first self-portrait (nude). She was a prodigious and relentless painter whose work reflects her lifelong commitment to art. Like her mother, Neel was also an uncompromising woman. She always believed she was an artist and if she painted a "good picture" she was happy. Her energy was centered around creating her art, not around selling it. Neel accepted the isolation that accompanied her decision to be an artist. Consistent with her determination to paint, Neel said, "**Art doesn't care if you're a man or a woman. One thing you have to have is talent, and you have to work like mad.**"[5] Alice Neel died on October 13, 1984, at the age of 84.[6]

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES

Alice Neel's method of working with her subjects was very disciplined. Each individual, couple or family who came to her studio for a portrait selected their own clothing. "**Before painting, when I talk to the person, they unconsciously assume their most characteristic pose, which in a way involves all their character and social standing—what the world has done to them and their retaliation.**"[7] Once her subjects assumed a comfortable pose, Neel drew the outline of their features with a thin ultramarine paint. Then, working on the complete canvas, she quickly filled in the color. Her paintings took anywhere from three days to an entire week to complete. Neel was very interested in capturing the spontaneity of her subjects' features. Sometimes she left the ground or part of the canvas thinly painted. Neel is well-known for her unsentimental portraits of the 1960s and 1970s.

"Art is two things: a search for a road and a search for freedom. It's very hard to get freedom. You know all these things in life keep crawling over you all the time, so it's hard to feel free."[8]

Alice Neel

1 Ann Sutherland Harris. Alice Neel: Paintings 1933-1982. Exhibition catalogue. (The Art Gallery, Loyola Marymount University, 1985) 5.
2 Patricia Hills. Alice Neel. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1983) 12.
3 Henry R. Hope. "Alice Neel: Portraits of an Era." Art Journal. Summer 1979, Vol. 38, No. 4: 274.
4 Judith Higgins. "Alice Neel and the Human Comedy." Art News. Oct. 1984: 75.
5 Hills 77.
6 Judith Higgins. "Alice Neel: 1900-1984." Art News. Dec. 1984.
7 Hills 189-90.
8 Hills 77.
9 Hills 90.
10 Hills 183.
11 Hills 185.

Alice Neel

IMAGE: Detail from T.B. Harlem, 1940
MEDIUM: Oil on canvas
LOCATION: National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.
SIZE: 30" x 30"

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for aesthetics before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn To:

- examine different theories of art
- discuss various criteria for valuing art
- analyze *T.B. Harlem* from a variety of philosophical viewpoints
- develop logical arguments based on sound reasoning

AESTHETIC THEORIES:

The following theories present different viewpoints from which we can consider works of art. They are summarized in the boxes below in language appropriate for your students. Introduce and/or review the theories if necessary.

IMITATIONALISM
Literal Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the realistic presentation of subject matter. A work is successful if it looks like and reminds us of what we see in the real world.

FORMALISM
Visual Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the effective organization of the elements of art through the arrangement of visual principles.

EXPRESSIONISM
Emotional Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the vivid communication of moods, feelings and ideas to the viewer.

INSTRUMENTALISM
Functional Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is that it serves a function that is practical or furthers moral, religious, social or political points of view.

INSTITUTIONALISM
Contextual Classification

The most important thing about a work of art is the context in which it exists and in which it is validated by the artworld.

Theories:

Imitationalism

Formalism

Expressionism

Instrumentalism

Institutionalism

AESTHETIC QUESTIONS:

Organize your students for a discussion. Work with your entire class or divide students into groups. Discuss one or more of the following aesthetic questions. In addition to a discussion, you may choose to ask students to write their answers to the questions and present them to the class.

1. Alice Neel's work was not accepted in the United States from 1940 through the 1960s because during those years Abstract Expressionism was the dominant style. Neel's work was realistic and therefore did not conform to the preferences of the contemporary artworld. When a movement such as Abstract Expressionism occurs, what happens to artists who work outside of the accepted style? Is conforming to a certain style at a given time a valid criterion for labeling a work of art as successful? Why or why not? What aesthetic theory would support the value of Neel's work, despite the fact that she did not work in the style of Abstract Expressionism? Why?

2. Read the following quote from Neel to your students and discuss the aesthetic issues it presents:

   > "I didn't let being a woman hold me back. There was a man on the Project (WPA): 'Oh, Alice Neel! The woman who paints like a man!' And I went to all the trouble of telling him that I did not paint like a man but like a woman--but not like a woman was supposed to paint, painting china. I felt it was a free-for-all. And I never thought it was a man's world. I thought women were always there, even though they may not have participated fully. Art doesn't care if you're a man or a woman. One thing you have to have is talent, and you have to work like mad".[1]

   What were some of the beliefs that made it difficult for women to receive recognition as artists? Does contemporary society still value these beliefs? Is society changing the way in which it recognizes women artists? How? Why? If artworks created by women were not considered art during the time they were created, can they legitimately be considered art at a later time? Why? Why not?

3. Introduce or review each of the five aesthetic theories presented in this unit. When your students demonstrate understanding of the concepts ask the following question: "Using each aesthetic theory as an example of a different point of view, how could you argue for or against the value of Neel's work?"

4. What social concerns affect us today that could provide ideas for works of art? How are these concerns expressed through art? What is it about art that makes it a powerful vehicle for expressing social concern? In your opinion, is this a necessary or important role of art in society? Why? Why not?

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[1] Patricia Hills, Alice Neel (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1983) 77.

Alice Neel

FOR THE TEACHER
ART PRODUCTION GUIDE

"About Myself"

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art production before beginning this component of the lesson.

TEACHER PREPARATION:

1. Read the "Art Production Guide" and "Student Planning Guide" for Alice Neel.
2. Duplicate the "Student Planning Guide" and the "Thumbnail Sketches Worksheet".
3. Prepare the necessary art materials and prepare to demonstrate any studio techniques as needed. Practice with the materials before you begin.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS: *pencils, oil pastels, pastels, crayons, watercolors, acrylics or tempera paint, newsprint, illustration board or white paper, brushes, water, hand or tile mirrors, paint thinner, stylists and palette knives.*

4. Plan your schedule to allow time for your students to research, investigate, explore, create, reflect and assess their work.
5. The criteria for the following art production activity are based on the work of Alice Neel. The list below is a summary of the characteristics of her work. Use this list as a reference for review.

CHARACTERISTICS OF NEEL'S WORK:

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- portrayed people in comfortable clothing and natural poses
- used color, shape, line, repetition, contrast and depth cues to show apparent space

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM:

- identified emotionally with her subjects often to the point of self-detachment
- revealed a particular psychological state of her subjects
- used posture to represent a certain state of mind

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- used a thin ultramarine outline to sketch the portraits
- painted with oils
- worked quickly, taking only three to seven days to complete a portrait
- often left the background thinly painted

ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY:

Ask your students to draw or paint a self-portrait which denotes a psychological state and uses symbols to express personal meaning.

CRITERIA FOR ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY:

Have your students incorporate the following criteria in their work. These criteria will provide the structure upon which you can base your assessment of their learning.

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- use color symbolically
- use color, shape, line, repetition, contrast and depth cues to show apparent space

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM:

- express a psychological state through the use of color, shape and line
- express meaning through posture

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- draw or paint with the media of your choice
- demonstrate skillful use of media

ART PRODUCTION WITH THE CLASS:

PREPARATION:

1. Review the characteristics of Neel's work.
2. Distribute and introduce the Student Planning Guide. Read it with your students and check for their understanding.
3. Introduce the art production activity and criteria.
4. Introduce or review vocabulary as needed.

PRESENTATION:

Discuss the following ideas with your students before they begin their self-portraits:

1. The gesture of a figure is important because of its ability to convey meaning and reveal psychological states. The body language expressed by the position of the arms, torso, head and overall stature of a figure will express the feeling an artist is trying to portray. For example, a closed-body position where the arms are wrapped around the body, the head is facing downward and the hands are holding the head or covering the eyes may denote a turning inward or sadness. An open-body position where the arms are open, the fingers are outspread, and the head is facing upward may denote joy, freedom or happiness.
2. When more than one figure is included in a composition, the body language, either open or closed, in relation to other people in the work is also important. If one figure is seated and one is standing, the standing figure may appear to dominate over the seated person. If a figure's back is turned to other figures in the work or to the viewer, the figure may appear to be disinterested or unwilling to communicate. When figures are shown embracing it generally communicates love and friendship. A tightly cropped composition makes a them appear larger than life and, therefore, more personal to the viewer.
3. The effective use of color can also express psychological states. Colors often convey certain ideas, feelings and messages. Refer to the following list of examples in our society. Other societies have different cultural meanings, such as Japan/white/death.

   RED - fire, warmth, love, danger, heat, stop, life (blood), communism, ceremony

   BLUE - serenity, relaxation, depression, victory, prize, award

   GREEN - serenity, wealth, relaxation, go, direction (signs), greed, envy, growth, immaturity

   YELLOW - caution, slow, warmth, sun, heat, daytime, jaundice, scandal

   ORANGE - warmth, heat

   VIOLET - royalty

   BLACK - death, evil, night, profit, magic, boycott

   WHITE - purity, innocence, paleness, truce, comfort, truth, snow

VOCABULARY:

Self portrait—
a portrait of oneself done by oneself

Psychological state—
a mental and behavioral mode or condition of being

Inner self—
of or relating to the mind or spirit belonging to oneself

Emotion—
a strong generalized feeling or any of various complex reactions found in psychological and physical behavior, such as love, hate, fear, anger

Symbol—
something that stands for another thing; especially an object that represents something abstract—a flag for patriotism or a dove for peace

PRACTICE:

If your students have had limited experience with drawing the face and figure, distribute hand mirrors and allow them time to practice before beginning section V. If your students do not need time to practice, proceed with section V.

PRODUCTION:

1. Have your students begin working with the Student Planning Guide sections I through V.
2. Introduce and demonstrate media or techniques as needed.
3. Have your students complete the art production activity.

ASSESSMENT:

1. The Student Planning Guide asks your students to assess their own learning. After they have completed their written evaluations, gather your class for a group discussion. Ask your students to review the criteria and discuss their own work in relation to those criteria. Encourage your students to use their written comments to support their remarks.
2. Use information from your students' written assessments and group discussion to assist you in your final assessment. Your students work and their planning guides will provide useful information for portfolio assessment.
3. Exhibit your students' artwork.

AN ADDITIONAL IDEA FOR THIS UNIT:

Have the students take their original painting or drawing and trace it on a piece of paper and reduce the tracing on the copy machine. Duplicate the reduced tracing four times onto four pieces of 6"X6" drawing paper or illustration board. Then the students need to paint or draw each one in a different style: Impressionism, Cubism, Pop Art and Abstract Expressionism.

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Name Date

STUDENT PLANNING GUIDE

Alice Neel

"About Myself"

This worksheet is designed to help you develop an idea for your art production. These exercises will help organize your thoughts to create a powerful statement and composition.

Alice Neel's intent was to capture the essence of her subjects' emotional or intellectual nature.

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I. ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Your challenge is to draw or paint a self-portrait which denotes a psychological state and uses symbols to express personal meaning.

CRITERIA FOR ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Incorporate the following criteria into your self-portrait.

ELEMENTS OF ART

- use color symbolically
- use color, shape, line, repetition, contrast and depth cues to show apparent space

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM

- express a psychological state through the use of color, line and shape
- express meaning through posture

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES

- draw or paint with the media of your choice
- demonstrate skillful use of media

II. RESEARCH/HOMEWORK/ART JOURNAL

1. Use the resources at your school or local library to locate periodicals and books that feature self-portraits of artists. Look at a variety of examples for inspiration.
2. To help develop ideas for your self-portrait, record the following information in an art journal or on a piece of paper.
   - your best qualities
   - qualities you would like to improve
   - feelings and emotions you have experienced that you may want to express in a self-portrait
   - the psychological meaning you associate with different colors (for example, red=STOP, DANGER, FIRE OR EXCITEMENT).
   - the colors that express the qualities and emotions you want to convey in your portrait.
3. Decide how you will incorporate color, shape, line, texture, repetition and contrast to show apparent space.
4. Decide from what direction the light source in your self-portrait will originate.

III. BRAINSTORMING/GETTING AN IDEA

List five possible ideas for your self-portrait. State the situation and the position, the location and the clothing of the figure . Include the colors you want to use.

Example: A figure seated on a bench wearing a soccer uniform after losing an important game. Colors: blues, purples and grays.

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IV. SELECTION

Select your best idea and describe it in further detail. Discuss any symbols you will use to express meaning. Write a statement that explains your intent in the space below.

V. DESIGN/PREPARE SKETCHES

Draw a series of thumbnail sketches using the worksheet. Carefully consider how you will use shape, line and texture in your self-portrait. Remember to use these elements to create repetition, overlapping and contrast to show apparent depth.

1. Select one sketch and enlarge it on a piece of newsprint.
2. Use a mirror to carefully examine your features as you add the details to your enlarged drawing.
3. Transfer your drawing to an illustration board or a piece of paper.

VI. MATERIALS

Discuss your sketches and the materials you will need to complete your portrait with your teacher. List the materials you will need below.

VII. PRODUCTION

(Fill out during the reproduction of your work of art.) Complete your self-portrait with the materials you have selected. Analyze any problems you experienced while working and note them below. If you encountered any mistakes, how did you incorporate them into your work?

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VIII. SELF-ASSESSMENT

(Fill out after the completion of your assignment.) The assessment of your work is based on the criteria listed in section I. Review the criteria before you assess your work.

How effectively does your work meet the criteria?

In your own words, state what it is you have learned by doing this activity.

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BOOKS:

Alice Neel. Exhibition catalogue. Fort Wayne, Indi.: Fort Wayne Museum of Art, 1979.

Belcher, Gerald L. and Margaret L. Belcher. Collecting Souls Gathering Dust: The Struggles of Two American Artists—Alice Neel and Rhoda Medary. New York: Paragon House, 1991.

*Harris, Ann Sutherland. Alice Neel: Paintings 1933-1982. (Exhibition catalogue) Los Angles: Postal Graphics. The Art Gallery, Loyola Marymount University, 1983.

*Hills, Patricia. Alice Neel. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1983.

Hope, Henry R. Alice Neel. Exhibition catalogue. Fort Lauderdale, Flor.: Fort Lauderdale Museum of Art, 1978.

Hope, Henry R. "Moore College of Art Doctoral Address." Alice Neel: The Woman and Her Work. Athens, Geo.: Georgia Museum of Art, 1975.

Nemser, Cindy and William, D. Paul Jr. Alice Neel: The Woman and Her Work. Athens, Geo.: Georgia Museum of Art, 1975.

Pennsylvania Acadamy of the Fine Arts. Alice Neel: Paintings Since 1970. Philadelphia, Penn.: Pennsylvania Acadamy of the Fine Arts, 1985.

Robert Miller Gallery. Alice Neel: Drawings and Watercolors. Exhibition catalogue. New York, 1986.

PERIODICALS:

*Castle, Frederick Ted. "Interview with Alice Neel." Art Forum Oct. 1993: 36-41, reprint of interview from Nemser.

*Higgins, Judith. "Alice Neel and the Human Comedy." Art News Oct. 1984: 70-79.

Higgins, Judith. "Alice Neel, 1900-1984." Art News Dec. 1984: 14.

*Hope, Henry R. "Alice Neel: Portraits of an Era." Art Journal Summer 1979: 274.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES:

Baurr, Jack. Address. Memorial Service for Alice Neel. Whitney Museum of American Art. 7 Feb. 1985.

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*These books and articles have a wealth of information and are easily accessible to supplement your teaching unit.

Student Worksheet

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Faith Ringgold

Faith Ringgold

ART CRITICISM

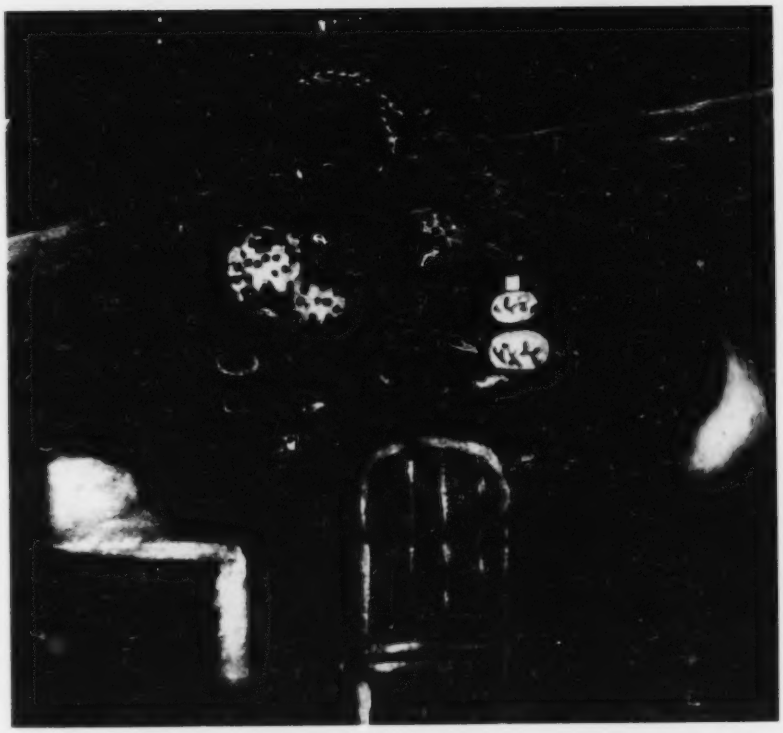

IMAGE: Detail from Tar Beach, 1988
- The Woman on the Bridge Series
MEDIUM: Acrylic paint, pieced and printed fabric
LOCATION: Solomon Guggenheim Museum, New York
SIZE: 74" x 96"

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art criticism before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn To:

- describe and analyze the elements of art in works of art
- interpret the meaning of works of art
- make informed judgments about works of art based on various criteria
- recognize and interpret the artist's intent

Organize your class for a discussion about the story quilt titled Tar Beach by Faith Ringgold. Display the art reproduction in a prominent place for viewing. Use the following questions to guide your students in an in-depth discussion. The possible responses that follow each group of questions are included to help support the discussion.

DESCRIPTION:

QUESTIONS

Let's begin our discussion by listing everything we see in the work of art.

Do you see words in the quilt? What do they say?

How many people are represented?

How old are they?

What are they wearing?

What are the people doing?

Where are they?

What other details in the quilt do you notice?

What media and techniques were used to create the work?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

This is a quilt that tells a story about a little girl.

The border is made up of square and rectangular pieces of various fabrics sewn together and quilted.

Included in the border at the top and bottom are pieces of cloth where the story is handwritten.

In the middle is the quilted painting that illustrates the story.

The story takes place on a rooftop in a big city.

Around the edge of the roof is a short wall with red tiles on top.

In the lower right corner is an ornate border edge on the exterior of the building.

In the lower left corner, there are three poles with four pieces of laundry hanging on a clothesline with clothespins.

On the edge of the next building, is a line of green tiles.

There are four or five potted plants.

There are seven figures in the painting.

In the center of the roof are four adults who are sitting at a green table playing cards.

There are cards on the table, a white lamp with a pink design and two glasses, one of which is on a coaster.

There are two women and two men at the table.

The man who is facing away from us is wearing a gray and black plaid shirt and gray pants and is sitting in a white chair.

The man in profile is wearing a white sleeveless T-shirt, blue pants, no shoes and is sitting in a red chair with a bottle next to the chair on the floor.

The woman facing us is wearing a white blouse or dress with red polka dots and a matching hair tie; she is watching the children laying on the mattress.

The woman in profile is wearing a red sleeveless blouse with gray polka dots, white pants, white shoes and is sitting on a yellow and black striped stool.

To the right of the four adults is another table on which there sits half of a watermelon on a plate, a pitcher, six cans or glasses, four bottles, a tin of cupcakes or cookies and a bowl of something white.

The table has a grayish-white table cloth with blue polka dots.

Underneath the table is a basket with a red and white checkered cloth over the top.

There are two children, one girl and one boy, laying on their backs on a white sheet or blanket and resting their heads on two pillows on a mattress.

Around the edges of the mattress is a border made up of irregular red, yellow and blue shapes (another blanket).

The boy is wearing a gray T-shirt, a pair of yellow short overalls with gray pin striping and gray socks.

The girl is wearing a white dress with gray and pink designs.

The girl's hair is braided into three ponytails--each has a white bow.

Both children are staring up at the little girl flying in the sky above the city and the bridge.

The flying girl is wearing what looks like the same dress as the girl on the roof and her hair is also in three braided ponytails with white bows.

The city is represented by rectangular shapes and there are two arched bridge supports at the top of the painting.

The sky is dark blue with shining stars.

There are lights on the bridge and lights in the windows of the buildings.

The media are acrylic paint, printed and quilted fabrics.

ANALYSIS:

QUESTIONS

What colors are in the work?

Are there a few or many?

Are the combinations of colors simple or complex?

Are there any neutrals?

Where are the colors most saturated? Least saturated?

Do the colors have contrast?

Is depth created by the use of color?

What type of shapes are used?

Is the use of shapes simple? Complex?

Do the shapes repeat?

Does the repetition create a pattern?

Do the shapes create contrast? Is so, how?

How do the shapes create the appearance of depth?

How would you describe the lines?

Are there a few lines or many?

Are they straight, curved, zigzag, horizontal, vertical, parallel?

How would you describe the texture? Is it uniform or varied throughout the image?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

There are many different colors.

The color combinations are complex and contrast with one another.

The colors repeat and create patterns throughout the quilt.

The overlapping of some colors contribute to the illusion of space.

There are many variations of neutrals (white, grays and blacks).

Mixing the neutrals with color create various saturations and brightness.

The values repeat and contrast with one another.

The most saturated colors are on the quilted border.

The shapes are geometric and organic. The figures are organic shapes. The background and border are predominately geometric shapes.

The shapes are complex. They repeat and contrast with one another.

The square shapes of the border create a pattern around the quilt.

The shapes use the depth cues of size and overlap to convey space.

Diagonal, vertical and curvilinear lines are predominate in the center of the quilt. These lines create the edges of the rooftop, the clothes line, and the lights. The designs in the quilted squares have a variety of lines. The quilting threads create a pattern of diagonal lines across the entire image.

A quilted texture is created by the stitching. The texture is consistent throughout the image.

INTERPRETATION:

QUESTIONS

What story is the artist telling?

What is the meaning of *Tar Beach*?

What is the underlying message of the work?

What was the artist's intent?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

It is a hot summer night.

The laundry is hung out to dry and the adults are relaxing by playing cards.

Everyone is trying to stay cool.

The girl who is older than her brother is entertaining or watching her brother. This appears to be the most important part of the painting because the artist has used white for the mattress and the girl's dress which together create the brightest area of the painting.

The girl on the mattress and the girl in the sky are the same.

If the girl can fly over something in her imagination, then she will own it or have power over it.

Perhaps she is telling her brother about her ability to fly. Maybe he is hoping that he will be able to fly.

All you need to achieve your dreams is imagination.

There is a feeling of a loving, close-knit family making the best of what they have--making their own fun for a summer night--a special night.

Announce the artist, title and date of the work of art

A confirmation check from outside sources is used to support the interpretation of the work. Present the following confirmation check to your students. Compare the experts' statements with your students' interpretations. Are they similar? Different? Ask your students to respond to the experts' statements.

CONFIRMATION CHECK:

Have the students close their eyes while you read the text of *Tar Beach* to them:

1. I will always remember when the stars fell down around me and lifted me up above the George Washington Bridge.
2. I could see our tiny roof top with Mommy and Daddy and Mr. and Mrs. Honey, our next door neighbors, still playing cards as if nothing was going on, and BeBe, my baby brother, laying real still on the mattress, just like I told him to, his eyes like huge floodlights tracking me through the sky.
3. Sleeping on Tar Beach was magical. Laying on the roof at night with stars and skyscraper buildings all around me made me feel rich, like I owned all that I could see. The bridge was my most prized possession.
4. Daddy said the George Washington Bridge was the longest and most beautiful bridge in the world and that it opened in 1931 on the very

day I was born. Daddy worked on the bridge hoisting cables. Since then, I've wanted that bridge to be mine.

5. Now I have claimed it. All I had to do was fly over it for it to be mine forever. I can wear it like a giant diamond necklace, or just fly above it and marvel at its sparkling beauty. I can fly, yes fly. Cassie Louise Lighfoot, only eight years old and in the third grade and I can fly.

6. That means I am free to go wherever I want to for the rest of my life. Daddy took me to see the new union building he is working on. He can walk on steel girders high up in the sky and not fall. They call him The Cat.

7. But still he can't join the union because Grandpa wasn't a member. Well Daddy is going to own that building because I'm gonna fly over it and give it to him. Then it won't matter that he's not in their old union or whether he's colored or a half breed Indian like they say.

8. He'll be rich and won't have to stand on 24 story high girders and look down. He can look up at his building going up. And Mommy won't cry all winter when Daddy goes to look for work and doesn't come home. And Mommy can laugh and sleep late like Mrs. Honey and we can have ice cream every night for dessert.

9. Next I'm going to fly over the ice cream factory just to make sure we do. Tonight we're going up to Tar Beach. Mommy is roasting peanuts and frying chicken and Daddy will bring home a watermelon. Mr. and Mrs. Honey will bring the beer and their old green card table. And then the stars will fall around me and I will fly to the union building.

10. I'll take Bebe with me. He has threatened to tell Mommy and Daddy if I leave him behind. I have told him it's very easy, anyone can fly. All you need is somewhere to go that you can't get to any other way. The next thing you know, you're flying among the stars.

Discuss the text in relationship to the interpretation and the meaning of the work. What do you know through the text that you cannot perceive in the work of art?

The artist used painting, quilting and autobiographical and fictional narrative in this work of art. "Her family often went up on the roof on hot summer nights. Adults played cards. Children ate and stayed up late, lying together on a mattress. The childless couples, who always seemed to have more money than the families with children, are represented by Mr. and Mrs. Honey...."[1]

After the confirmation check, continue to Judgment

JUDGMENT:

QUESTIONS

Was the artist successful in accomplishing her intent?

What criteria are you using to support your decision?

Do you think *Tar Beach* is beautiful?

If so, does its beauty contribute to the merit of the work?

In your opinion, what qualities make *Tar Beach* an important work of art?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

The artist successfully communicated an important idea.

The idea centers on the importance of the family and customs that a family cherishes, hope and optimism.

Tar Beach is very colorful with many details and repeating patterns.

The quilt is beautiful. It makes you want to look at it for a long time and read the story.

The lesson of the story-telling quilt is about the power of the imagination.

The artist used appropriate materials to create a beautiful and important work of art.

Quilting is an activity that has a long tradition in the United States.

Because of her talent and skill, the artist elevated a craft technique to an art form.

Faith Ringgold. Tar Beach. (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1991). The last page of this book is not numbered, but is an excellent summary of the meaning and ideas of *Tar Beach*.

ART CRITICISM ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #1

1. Ask your students to look carefully at *Tar Beach*, using what they have learned about interpretation. Ask them to write a list of the actual objects in the quilt (i.e. people, table, bridge).
2. After they have made a list of what is in the quilt, ask your students to write a second list of what those objects might be symbols of (i.e. magic, freedom, power). What does the quilt itself symbolize?
3. Divide the class into small groups to discuss their individual lists. Have students compare their responses with the responses of others.
4. Complete the activity with a class discussion about your students' findings.

Ask them questions such as:

Did this process help you to see beyond the obvious? How?

Did you discover anything new in or about the image? What?

Did you gain any new insights or understanding of the work? What are they?

Has your original opinion about this work been altered in any way? How? Explain your answers.

ACTIVITY #2

Ask students to contrast and compare the work of Faith Ringgold with the works of the following artists:

- Red Grooms
- Alice Neel
- Mary Ellen Mark
- Roy Lichtenstein
- Victor Vasarely
- Jackson Pollock

Faith Ringgold

ART HISTORY

Faith Ringgold, 1992, Courtesy of Faith Ringgold, Inc.

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art history before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn:

- about the artist's life
- how life experiences (social, political, economical) influence the artist
- about the artist's media and technique
- about the artist's intent and the context of the work of art

In 1978, artist Faith Ringgold was awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for her sculpture work. Eleven years later, she received a second grant from the N.E.A. for painting. Today, Ringgold's work is found in the collections of some of the country's finest art institutions, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

FAMILY INFLUENCES

On October 8, 1930, Willi Posey Jones and Andrew Louis Jones gave birth to their third and last child, Faith. She was often sick with severe asthma, and spent a great deal of her childhood at home with her mother, Willi. As a fashion designer, her mother was knowledgeable in the many ways of working with cloth and was able to teach her a great deal about the creative uses of fabric. Ringgold was nurtured and supplied with plenty of crayons, thread, fabric and other materials for creating art.

The tradition of quilting in Ringgold's family began with her great-great-grandmother who, as a house-slave in Florida, sewed quilts and who taught her own daughter, Faith's great-grandmother, about the art of quilt-making. The skills of fabric work were passed on from generation to generation. Ringgold's father was also an important figure in her life. He bought her very first drawing board and easel and helped teach her to read.[1]

LIFE IN HARLEM

Ringgold was always intrigued with the family stories that her parents told of the 1920s and 30s and the Harlem Renaissance. While most of the people who lived in Harlem were hard working with families, it also offered a plethora of entertainment for both blacks and whites in bars, clubs, cabarets and jazz joints. Growing up in Harlem, Ringgold had the opportunity to experience the diverse and intense energy of a variety of black performers—including singers, dancers, comedians, and jazz bands—at such exciting places as the famous Apollo Theatre and the Savoy Ballroom.[2] Harlem was home to such successful African Americans as Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, jazz musician Duke Ellington, and N.A.A.C.P. founding members W.E.B. Dubois and Roy Wilkins.

When Ringgold was twelve, her family moved from the Valley area in the heart of Harlem to the Sugar Hill area. Leaving the Valley area meant leaving the swarms of shops, libraries, theaters, clubs, and schools which were so abundant there.

EDUCATION

Education was always stressed at home. Ringgold displayed talent in art and in her academic endeavors as well. In 1948, her senior year at George Washington High School, Ringgold decided that she wanted to be an artist. Her mother was somewhat disappointed in this career choice, but Ringgold was passionate about the decision and enrolled herself in the City College of New York, determined to pursue a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. Unfortunately, the school's policy limited women to a Bachelor of Science degree in education. Ringgold resigned herself to being an art teacher.

At twenty, Ringgold married jazz pianist Robert Earl Wallace. In January of 1952, she gave birth to their first child, Michele, and in December of the same year, to a second daughter, Barbara. The couple separated in 1954 and were divorced two years later. She remarried in 1962 to Burdette Ringgold, a man whom she had met during her childhood in Harlem.

Ringgold graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in education in 1955 and received her Master of Art degree in 1959 from the City College of New York. She taught in the New York City Public Schools for eighteen years. During her time as an art educator, Ringgold instructed students in the elementary through high school levels. After a full day of teaching, Ringgold would spend the evening painting at home. In the summer of 1961, she took her mother and daughters with her on a trip to Europe to see the great artworks of Western civilization. When Ringgold returned, she was fully determined to become an artist and made a commitment to produce her own art. The dining room became her studio.

A SEARCH FOR STYLE

Many artists struggle all their lives to achieve their own personal style. Ringgold's style evolved through many stages before she felt comfortable with what she was creating. In the 60s and 70s, the civil rights, black power and women's movements had a major influence on Ringgold and her work as an artist. In the summer of 1963, she began to really search for her own artistic style. She read works by black authors such as James Baldwin, Amiri Baraka, and Alice Walker. From her readings, Ringgold felt a tremendous sense of black pride which she wanted to express through her painting. Between 1963 and 1967, using a hard edge Pop Art style on stretched canvas, she painted the black experience as she knew it. This work resulted in the American People Series that included such paintings as *Between Friends*, which depicts racial tension, *American Dream*, which portrays an image of a black man trying to emanate a white persona, and *Cocktail Party*, which displays the scene of a party where everyone is white, except for one black person.

Next, Ringgold painted three murals: *U.S. Postage Stamp Commemorating the Advent of Black Power, The Flag is Bleeding*, and *Die*. Realizing that these paintings were dealing with the black experience on a negative and perhaps antagonistic level, Ringgold found herself feeling somewhat troubled by her work. She concluded that she must rethink her ideas. Ringgold decided that, as a black artist, her work must deal with the blackness of her people, and the black experience in general, more positively. She committed herself to making this change.

Ringgold has "described how her teachers were unable to show her the mechanics of painting black skin color, and how they persisted in thinking of all painted figures as white, one of the barriers to her making art that was true to her own vision."[3] Ringgold chose to eliminate the use of any white pigments in the skin tone of the African-Americans in her paintings. She admired the matte black paint quality found in the work of Ad Reinhardt. "Initially, one sees only a black field, obdurately [unyieldingly] abstract. On patient closer scrutiny, a cross-like form and the underlying reds, blues and greens reveal themselves...thus suggesting the depths of black itself.... Unable to ask Reinhardt how he achieved his matte, glowing surface (he did it by draining the oil from his paint and mixing his colors with Mars Black), Ringgold developed her own technique of using dry pigment with burnt umber and making her own oil base.[4] She called her new paintings the *Black Light Series* (1967-1969). In 1970, she exhibited these stretched canvas paintings, which included *Flag for the Moon: Die Nigger, Six Shades of Black*, and *United States of Attica*, at the Spectrum Gallery.

"Tar Beach is really our old roof in Harlem. When I was a kid, on hot nights we'd go up to the roof. The kids would have mattresses to sleep on, but we'd stay up and listen to the adults talk and play cards...We had freedom on the roof as long as we were quiet. It's some of my best memories of growing up....what matters in art is not what it's made out of, but the ideas behind it. Good art has serious ideas behind it."[7]

Faith Ringgold

EXPLORING TRADITION

During the 1970s, Ringgold was influenced by the black and women's movements. Some of these influences came through in her exploration of ideas from two non-Western Sources:

(1) At the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, Ringgold viewed a number of Tibetan ***tankas***, which are sacred paintings with brocade bordered frames much like a wall-hanging. While in Europe, she also painted *Political Landscapes*, a series of abstract watercolors with text. Upon returning home, Ringgold cut her acrylic paintings off of their stretchers. Adding framed borders, she created the *Feminist Series*, based on an anthology of historical African Amer.can women, and *Slave Rape*. Ringgold's mother made the quilted borders for these paintings.

(2) At the same time, Ringgold also researched African art, oral storytelling, tradition, rituals and ceremonies in which masks were worn. The results of her research produced three-dimensional, life-size masks and soft-sculptures which were either worn for music, dance, and drama performances or hung on the gallery wall. Her mother made the clothing for the soft sculptures and her daughter, Michelle Wallace, wrote some of the performance scripts.

Some of the masks from this time include the *Family of Women Series*, which was a biographical account of the women whom Ringgold admired in Harlem, and the *Witch Mask Series*, which illustrated the power of women to speak out. Some of the soft sculptures include the *Women on a Pedestal Series* and the *Harlem Series, 76*, which contained sculptures of both Martin Luther King, Jr. and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. In these works, Ringgold incorporated traditional African designs, traditional materials used predominately by women—cloth, yarn, foam rubber, coconuts, beads, raffia, fringe and rhinestones—and used techniques of embroidery, needlepoint, sewing and quilting to express her ideas. However, this choice of fibers posed an aesthetic dilemma—would her art now be considered craft and not fine art? Regardless, Ringgold continued to diligently pursue her art in the direction it was taking.

OBTAINING EXPOSURE

Beginning in the mid-60s, Ringgold tried to exhibit her work and obtain national recognition. It was difficult for Ringgold—she was a woman, she was black and her work dealt with ethnic issues. Ringgold decided to take matters into her own hands. In 1972, she lectured, exhibited, performed and toured with her tankas, masks and soft sculptures to universities and colleges in the United States in order to gain exposure for her art. In 1973, she resigned from teaching art in the public schools and resolved to dedicate her time and energy towards being an artist.

Ringgold was an activist for art, women and African Americans. She was involved with Women Students and Artists for Black Art Liberation, an organization which, in 1970, exerted pressure to have at least fifty percent representation of black women in black art exhibits. She also protested against Art Strike, a group of white male artists who withdrew from the Venice Biennale and created their own alternative exhibit as a protest against the Vietnam War, racism, sexism and repression. This alternative exhibit did not allow women artists to particiapate.

THE STORY QUILT EMERGES

In the 1980s, Ringgold returned to painting and developed a more personal, autobiographical style which resulted in a major breakthrough—the story quilt. Her first quilt, *Echoes of Harlem* was a commission for a touring exhibition entitled *The Artist and the Quilt*. There was no text on this quilt. Rather, it was painted with thirty different faces on cotton fabric. Ringgold's mother cut and quilted the cloth pieces. In 1981, her mother died, and only six months later her sister passed away as well. Ringgold was emotionally devastated and painted *Emanon* (which is actually "no name" spelled backwards), the *Dah Series* and *Performance*. These abstract paintings helped in her grieving process.

Ringgold continued to experiment with painting, quilting, and narrative. Finally, she created her first story quilt, entitled *Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima?* In 1985, she created *Flag Story Quilt, Slave Rape Story Quilt, No More War Story Quilt* and *Now You Have Touched The Women Story Quilt*. These quilts have a minimal amount of narrative imagery, much of which is haunted with violence and death.[3] Some of Ringgold's quilts, such as *Mother's Quilt*, which was dedicated to her mother, and *Sonny's Quilt*, referring to Sonny Rollins whom she admired as a determined artist, have no text at all. Other quilts have elaborate text which is just as important as the quilt's visual image. The narrative is usually written from the point of view of an African American woman and deals with experiences in the urban black community. The text often describes problems and choices which are only partially resolved, leaving the viewer with something upon which to reflect.

The subjects are as numerous and varied as life, appearing in such series as:

Woman on the Bridge Series:

- *Tar Beach*
- *Double Dutch on the Golden Gate*
- *Dancing on the George Washington Bridge*
- *The Winner*
- *Woman Painting on the Bay Bridge*

Bitter Nest Series :

- *1986 Change: Faith Ringgold's Over 100 Pound Weight-Loss Story Quilt and Performance*

Lover's Quilt Series:

- *The Wedding*
- *Sleeping*
- *The Funeral*

Other Quilts:

- *Street Story Quilt*
- *Dinner Quilt*
- *The French Collection Series*
- *The Purple Quilt* (based on Alice Walker's book, *The Color Purple*)

In these quilts, Ringgold used photographic-etching (photomontage), tie-dyeing, printing, batik, pieced fabric, acrylic on canvas and hand-printed text in permanent magic marker to create these magnificent works of art.

"People called them weavings, banners, textiles, etc. They didn't seem to realize that they were looking at paintings on canvas, just because there were no wooden frames and no stretchers. I was afraid to take a chance of being accused of doing crafts. I already had several crosses to bear. Being black, a woman, a feminist were enough. Did I need to be further eliminated on the grounds that I was doing crafts instead of 'fine arts?'"[4]

Faith Ringgold

In 1991, the text and illustrations from the *Tar Beach* story quilt were published as a book. One year later, Ringgold released *Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky*. *Dinner at Aunt Connie's*, was released in 1993.

The rich cultural heritage of African Americans is deftly examined by this creative and determined artist. "What makes Ringgold's work unique is her unselfconscious continuation of 'old' traditions mingled with a self-conscious awareness of what they mean once placed in a 'new' context."[9] Today Ringgold is recognized as a significant force in the world of contemporary art. Her work can be found in the personal collections of Bill Cosby, Oprah Winfrey and Maya Angelou. She has received numerous awards including the Dryfus-Macdowell Fellowship in 1982, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in 1987 and the New York Foundation for the Arts Award in 1988. Ringgold continues working as an artist today and teaches for half of the year at the University of California in San Diego.

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

Ringgold's work has evolved from painting into a combination of quilting, painting on fabrics, and storytelling. Faith Ringgold appropriates any available media or technique to express her ideas about African-Americans. She uses photographic-etching, printing, oils, acrylics, silk screen, quilting, embroidery, hand printed text in permanent marker, yarn, foam rubber, beads, sequins, raffia, embroidery, needlepoint, sewing, tie-dye, batik, pieced fabrics of silk, brocade, canvas, cotton, Kente cloth, Kuba cloth and soft sculpture to transfer her life onto fabric, often with exceptional wit and humor.

In addition, "Ringgold borrowed an artistic format from Tibetan art: **tankas** or cloth borders. Tibetan artisans, as in other Far Eastern cultures, relied upon fabric borders to frame oil and ink drawings. Often these borders were created from beautiful silk brocades. The fabric borders made the works easy to store because they could be rolled, placed in fabric drawstring bags and piled in temple vaults."[10]

Ringgold makes preliminary sketches in pencil and watercolors to record her ideas. Using graph paper, she works out the proportions for the painting and the quilt squares. The fabric for the center of the quilt is painted with acrylics. Next, the fabrics for the border are cut and pinned. Finally, the pieces are sewn together and quilted.

"Aware of the human need to see ourselves in art, she wrote in 1970 that "Black art must use its own color black to create its own light, since that color is the most immediate black truth. Generally, black art must not depend on lights or light contrasts in order to express its blackness, either in principle or fact. All black artists are aware of this blackness I speak of, and with more black, black art to attest to it, white artists will also know what blackness and black truth is about."[9]

Faith Ringgold

[1] Leslie Sills, Inspirations: Stories About Women Artists (Niles Illinois: Albert Whitman & Company, 1989) 41.

[2] Jervis Anderson, This Was Harlem: A Cultural Portrait, 1900-1950. (New York: Noonday Press, Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1981).

[3] Mara R. Witzling, Voicing Our Visions: Writings by Women Artists. (New York: Universe Publishing, 1991) 352.

[4] Michele Wallace and Lowery Sims, Eds. "Beyond the Pale: Ringgold's Black Light Series," by Lucy R. Lippard, Faith Ringgold: Twenty Years of Painting, Sculpture and Performance (1963-1985), Exhibition catalogue. (New York: Studio Museum in Harlem, 1984) 22.

[5] Faith Ringgold, Change: Painted Story Quilts. Exhibition catalogue. (New York: Bernice Steinbaum Gallery, 1987).

[6] Lucy Lippard, "Faith Ringgold at Bernice Steinbaum," Art in America May 1987: 184-5.

[7] Dan Goodard, "Artist Ringgold Discovers Her Expression in Sewing," Express News (San Antonio, Texas) 7 Jan. 1990: 1H.

[8] Moira Roth, "Keeping the Feminist Faith," Faith Ringgold: Twenty Years of Painting, Sculpture and Performance (1963-1983), eds. Michele Wallace and Lowery Sims. (New York: Studio Museum in Harlem, 1984).

[9] Lucy R. Lippard, "Beyond the Pale: Ringgold's Black Light Series," Faith Ringgold: Twenty Years of Painting, Sculpture and Performance (1963-1985), eds. Michele Wallace and Lowery Sims. Exhibition Catalogue. (New York: Studio Museum in Harlem, 1984) 22.

[10] Lippard, "Beyond the Pale" 22.

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Faith Ringgold

AESTHETICS

IMAGE: Detail from Tar Beach, 1988
- The Woman on the Bridge Series
MEDIA: Acrylic paint, pieced and printed fabric
LOCATION: Solomon Guggenheim Museum, New York
SIZE: 74" x 96"

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for aesthetics before beginning this component of the lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Students Learn To:

- examine different theories of art
- discuss various criteria for valuing art
- analyze *Tar Beach* from a variety of philosophical viewpoints
- develop logical arguments based on sound reasoning

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AESTHETIC THEORIES:

The following theories present different viewpoints from which we can consider works of art. They are summarized in the boxes below in language appropriate for your students. Introduce and/or review the theories if necessary.

IMITATIONALISM
Literal Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the realistic presentation of subject matter. A work is successful if it looks like and reminds us of what we see in the real world.

FORMALISM
Visual Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the effective organization of the elements of art through the arrangement of visual principles.

EXPRESSIONISM
Emotional Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is the vivid communication of moods, feelings and ideas to the viewer.

INSTRUMENTALISM
Functional Qualities

The most important thing about a work of art is that it serves a function that is practical or furthers moral, religious, social or political points of view.

INSTITUTIONALISM
Contextual Classification

The most important thing about a work of art is the context in which it exists and in which it is validated by the artworld.

Theories:

Imitationalism

Formalism

Expressionism

Instrumentalism

Institutionalism

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AESTHETIC QUESTIONS:

Organize your students for a discussion. Work with your entire class or divide students into groups. Discuss one or more of the following aesthetic questions. In addition to a discussion, you may choose to ask students to write their answers to the questions and present them to the class.

1. Faith Ringgold experienced a dilemma as an artist. Her dilemma is clearly articulated in the following statement about her work. Ringgold said, "I was afraid to take a chance of being accused of doing crafts. I already had several crosses to bear. Being black, a woman, a feminist were enough. Did I need to be further eliminated on the grounds that I was doing crafts instead of fine arts?"[1] The issue of crafts versus fine art is an ongoing question asked by many experts in the field of art. In your opinion, is a quilt craft and therefore not fine art? Do you think there is a distinction between craft and fine art? If so what are the criteria that create the distinction? Is the choice of materials an important criteria? Why or why not? Is Faith Ringgold an artist or a craftsperson? What criteria could you use to support your position?

2. The quilt is a metaphor for home and community. Read the following quote to your students and discuss the aesthetic issues it presents:

   "Visually, quilts are a unified whole composed of individual units....the history of the medium is understood to be one of individual and communal endeavor. In this way, the quilt form itself subtly reinforces, both visually and by historic connotation, Ringgold's exploration and celebration of the individual/community dynamic."[2]

   How does Ringgold's quilt serve as a metaphor? In what way does it celebrate individuals within their communities?

3. A quilt is a functional item. Are Faith Ringgold's quilts meant to be used as blankets or covers? What qualities are similar between a functional quilt and Ringgold's quilt? What qualities are different?

4. Faith Ringgold was active in grassroots political movements throughout her lifetime. One issue that concerned her was the protection of artists' rights to use the American flag in their imagery. This issue has surfaced and caused concern during different periods of history. In 1970, Ringgold "was arrested with Jean Toche and Jon Hendricks for helping to organize the People's Flag Show at the Judson Church--a protest against repressive laws governing the use of the Stars and Stripes in art."[3] Do you think artists have the right to portray imagery like the flag of the United States in a negative light? How do you feel about works of art that show the American flag torn, burned, jeopardized or desecrated in some manner? Do you think artists should be censored when it comes to the use of the flag? Why or why not? In what ways are art and politics interrelated? Are there any other subjects that are controversial enough to warrant a discussion about censorship? If so, what are they?

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[1] Moris Roth, "Keeping the Feminists Faith," Faith Ringgold, Twenty Years of Painting, Sculpture and Performance (1963-1983), Exhibition catalogue, eds. Michele Wallace and Lowery Sims (New York: Studio Museum in Harlem, 1984) 14.

[2] Lou Cabeen, "Contemporary Political Fiber: Criticizing the Social Fabric," Fiberarts Summer 1990: 35.

[3] Lucy R. Lippard, "Faith Ringgold Flying Her own Flag," Ms. Magazine July 1976: 56.

Faith Ringgold

FOR THE TEACHER
ART PRODUCTION GUIDE

"A Personal Story"

PLEASE READ the instructional strategies for art production before beginning this component of the lesson.

TEACHER PREPARATION:

1. Read the "Art Production Guide" and "Student Planning Guide" for Faith Ringgold.
2. Duplicate the "Student Planning Guide" and the "Thumbnail Sketches Worksheet".
3. Prepare the necessary art materials and prepare to demonstrate any studio techniques as needed. Practice with the materials before you begin.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS: mat board, oak tag or illustration board, colored pencils, scissors, oil pastels, acrylic or tempera paints, brushes, construction paper, glue, markers, rulers, graph paper and access to different resources for different typefaces.

4. Plan your schedule to allow time for your students to research, investigate, explore, create, reflect and assess their work.
5. The criteria for the following art production activity are based on the work of Faith Ringgold. The list below is a summary of the characteristics of her work. Use this list as a reference for review.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF RINGGOLD'S WORK:

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- used stylized (simplified) forms/shapes
- created a palette of many colors
- created depth by overlapping colors, shapes, lines and textures
- created contrast and repetition
- used geometric and organic shapes
- used text for storytelling/narrative

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM:

- used family stories and traditions written in a journal
- used traditional and contemporary functions of a quilt
- used the meaning of color and shape

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- used quilt making/fabrics techniques
- used pencil or watercolor sketches
- used acrylic paint and mixed media

ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY:

Ask your students to design and create a story quilt design that expresses a personal memory or a family event.

CRITERIA FOR ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY:

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- use stylized (simplified) fo-ms/shapes
- use a palette of many colors
- create depth by overlapping colors and forms/shapes and textures
- create contrast and repetition with colors and shapes
- use geometric and organic shapes

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM:

- express a personal family story or tradition
- use two symbols in your story quilt design
- write a story or narrative

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- use a painting or drawing media of your choice
- demonstrate skillful use of media

ART PRODUCTION WITH THE CLASS:

PREPARATION:

1. Review the characteristics of Ringgold's work.
2. Distribute and introduce the Student Planning Guide. Read it with your students and check for their understanding.
3. Introduce the art production activity and criteria.
4. Introduce or review vocabulary as needed.

PRESENTATION:

Discuss the following ideas with your students before they begin their quilt design.

1. When families gather together, they often repeat the same stories over and over. Often, the stories are embellished with details by the storyteller. In many cultures the custom of storytelling is a primary means for teaching the history, customs and values of the people. An elder of a given culture usually holds the stories and teaches them, sometimes word for word, to members of a younger generation. This is how the tradition of storytelling is passed from one generation to the next generation.
2. Ask students to share a personal or family story with the class. When your students speak, ask them to use descriptive language that will help their listeners create their own visual images. Ask them to introduce the characters, the setting of their story and to describe it in great detail.
3. Discuss how symbolism is used to express ideas in works of art and what they might represent. For example: American flag-patriotism, dollar sign-money, heart- love, a ring-love or friendship, lion-courage or ABC's-education.
4. Personal experiences and family events are rich sources for ideas. Discuss possible ideas for subject matter with your students.
   a.) Family gatherings: picnics, reunions, funerals, summers at a cabin.
   b.) Family celebrations: weddings, christenings, graduations, birthdays, anniversaries or promotions.

PRODUCTION:

1. Have your students begin working with the Student Planning Guide sections I through V.
2. Introduce and demonstrate media and techniques as needed.
3. Have your students complete the art production activity.

ASSESSMENT:

1. The Student Planning Guide asks your students to assess their own learning. After they have completed their written evaluations, gather

VOCABULARY:

Symbol—
something that stands for another thing; especially an object that represents something abstract—a flag for patriotism or a dove for peace

Abstraction—
to reduce to greater simplicity; to make plain or easy; obtained by distillation of the main characteristics of an object

Narrative—
the practice of writing stories: a story

Oral Storytelling—
is the art of telling stories with the spoken word, not written

your class for a group discussion. Ask your students to review the criteria and discuss their own work in relation to those criteria. Encourage your students to use their written comments to support their remarks.

2. Use information from your students' written assessments and group discussion to assist you in your final assessment. Your students work and their planning guides will provide useful information for portfolio assessment.

3. Exhibit your students' artwork.

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Name Date

Faith Ringgold

STUDENT PLANNING GUIDE

"A Personal Story"

This worksheet is designed to help you develop an idea for your art production. These exercises will help organize your thoughts to create a powerful statement and composition.

When artists successfully express personal experiences through their works of art, the result is often visually powerful and thought provoking. Faith Ringgold said, "Good art work has serious ideas behind it."

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I. ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Your challenge is to create a story quilt design that expresses a personal memory or family event.

CRITERIA FOR ART PRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Incorporate the following criteria into your quilt design.

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- use stylized (simplified) forms/shapes
- use a palette of many colors
- create depth by overlapping colors and forms/shapes and textures
- create contrast and repetition with colors and shapes
- use geometric and organic shapes

IDEAS, FEELINGS & SYMBOLISM:

- express a personal family story or tradition
- use two symbols in your quilt design
- write a story or narrative

MEDIA & TECHNIQUES:

- use the media of your choice
- demonstrate skillful use of media

II. RESEARCH/HOMEWORK/ART JOURNAL

1. Use the resources at your school or local library to locate periodicals and books to research traditional and contemporary quilts. What are the characteristics of traditional quilts? Contemporary quilts? What are their similarities? What are their differences? Do quilts usually have words (narrative) as part of their designs?
2. What role does the story quilt have in your culture?
3. Do you have any quilts in your family? What are their histories? Who made them? Are there any stories that accompany the quilts (wedding, birth of a child, new home)?

III. BRAINSTORMING/GETTING AN IDEA

What family stories or personal experiences could you use as a subject matter for your quilt design? Look in your family photo album to get ideas for your work of art. List five possible family stories or personal experiences you could use for your quilt design.

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IV. SELECTION

Select your best idea and develop the story for your quilt design. Choose the narrative you will use as text if you decide to make it part of the design. Be sure to include enough visual information in the way of details and symbols to help viewers understand your story. Write a brief statement of your intent below.

V. DESIGN/PREPARE SKETCHES

Carefully consider the relationships among the art elements, the narrative (if you have chosen to use one) and the story you wish to express in your quilt design. If you choose to use symbols to help express your idea, incorporate them into your design.

1. Using graph paper, design three different borders using squares like those found on a traditional quilt. Select the border design you like the best.
2. Draw a series of thumbnail sketches of your story quilt on the worksheet.
3. Incorporate your border with your story quilt design.

VI. MATERIALS

Discuss your sketches and the materials you will need to complete your quilt design with your teacher. List the materials you will need below.

VII. PRODUCTION

(Fill out during the production of your work of art.) Complete your quilt design with the materials you have selected. Analyze any problems you experienced while working and note them below. If you encountered any mistakes, how did you incorporate them into your work?

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VIII. SELF-ASSESSMENT

(Fill out after the completion of your assignment.) The assessment of your work is based on the criteria listed in section I. Review the criteria before you assess your work.

How effective does your work meet the criteria?

In your own words, state what you have learned by doing this activity.

Faith Ringgold

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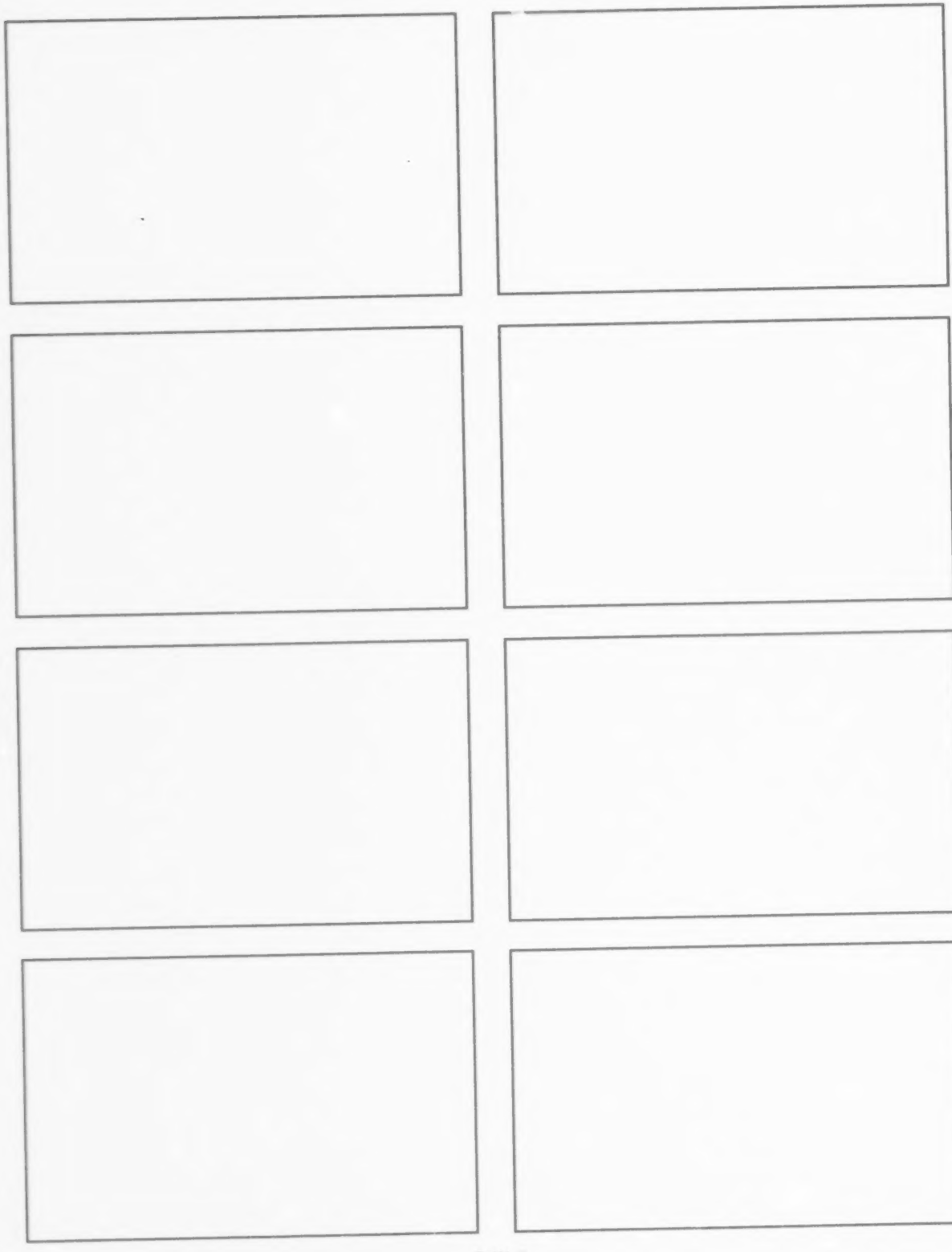
*These books and articles have a wealth of information and are easily accessible to supplement your teaching unit.

Student Worksheet



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About the Author & General Bibliography

About the Author

Dr. Diane Kordich

Diane Kordich earned her Ed.D. in art education from Indiana University in 1982. She is currently a professor at Northern Michigan University in Marquette where she has taught art and design for seventeen years.

Dr. Kordich is a member of the National Art Education Association and has acted as advisor to Northern Michigan University's student chapter for nearly twenty years. She has also served as vice president and awards chair for the Michigan Art Education Association.

Her personal and professional commitment to the education of both students and teachers is evidenced by her continuous involvement with community arts projects, her ongoing coordination and presentation of art education workshops and her affiliation with numerous art education organizations on both local and national levels. Dr. Kordich made a significant contribution to the revision of the Michigan Essential Goals and Objectives for Arts Education (1987-1989).

In 1994, Dr. Kordich was awarded the Arts Achievement Award from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. She was honored for her exceptional achievement in the arts and humanities.

Dr. Kordich's career has been marked by a special interest in multicultural education and issues relating to women. *Images of Commitment: 20th Century Women Artists* reflects her personal commitment to the continual improvement of art education in the schools.

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